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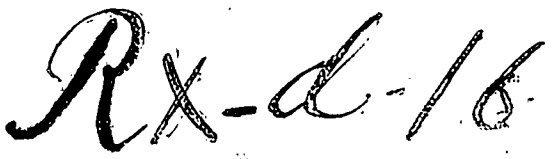
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BRIGANDAGE

IN

SOUTH ITALY.

...

BY

DAVID HILTON

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ac.

"E' una vasta cospirazione di cose e di nomini, di fatalitá e di errori, di passioni e di prejudizi, della storia o della politico, a danno della sicurezza delle provincie del mezzogiorno e della forza dell' Italia."

MASSARI. *Report to the Italian Parliament. May*, 1863.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND MARSTON,
14, LUDGATE HILL.
1864.

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SEAKELD, PRINTER, LONDON.

PREFACE.

THE purpose with which this book has been written is explained in the motto upon the title-page. I have attempted to describe that "vast conspiracy of things and men, of passions and prejudices, of history and politics, which impair the security of the Neapolitan provinces and the forces of Italy."

Though they are not so divided, these volumes consist of three parts. The First, consisting of five chapters, gives a rapid review of the history of brigandage from the earliest times down to the year 1860. The Second Part describes, also in five chapters, the natural, political, moral, and religious occasions, stimulants, and causes which have conspired to keep brigandage alive down

to our times, and which give it a strange power over the minds of the Neapolitan masses. The Third Part, consisting of four chapters, is devoted to a history, necessarily brief and incomplete, of the brigandage of the last three years.

The complicity in this great conspiracy, of the priests and the Papal government, is not a pleasant theme; but I have treated it with frankness and sincerity. The person and motives of the writer cease to be of any importance, when it is remembered that I only record here a part of the charges made against Rome by a nation of Roman Catholics. With the exception of the clerical party—that is to say, of the party accused—Italians are unanimous in laying the chief responsibility for political brigandage at the doors of the Vatican. My information has, however, been principally derived from the more conservative class of Italians. The deputies Massari and Castagnola, whose reports to the Chamber of Deputies are frequently quoted, belong to the conservative side of the body which they adorn.

I would not be understood to say that they are better authorities on this account; but the mention of the fact may relieve some readers of an apprehension that the daggers—steel or moral—of Mazzini and his republican friends are concealed in this book.

As a rule, the sources from which I have derived my materials for the historical part of this work are indicated in the notes. I make special acknowledgment of my obligations to the pamphlets of Marc Monnier on the Camorra and Brigandage. To the first of these pamphlets I am greatly indebted for the materials used in the eighth chapter of the first volume. But by far the most valuable contribution to the history of these disorders is the "Brigantaggio Alla Frontiera" of Alessandro Bianco di Saint-Jorioz. The author of this book was, during the period of which he writes, Chief of Staff to General Govone, commanding the military zone of the frontier.

In the literary execution of my task, I have encountered a difficulty peculiar to works of this

class. Treating of a social evil, it has sometimes been difficult, not to say impossible, to translate the Italian words which describe, with a marked colouring, portions of the natural and moral scenery of South Italy. A few of these words stand untranslated; but I believe that most of these have been used by other English writers.

THE AUTHOR.

ITALY, *August*, 1864.

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BRIGANDAGE IN SOUTH ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

TWENTY CENTURIES OF BRIGANDAGE.

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BRIGANDAGE has always existed in South Italy. In pre-Roman times, under the Republic, and under the Empire, the men of the mountains were the terror of the inhabitants of the plains. Time has softened the light in which we see the struggles between Rome and the nationalities subdued and absorbed by the Republic; while the compassion we must feel in reading the history of a war, which, fiercely maintained for two centuries, moved steadily and surely to the annihilation of brave peoples, forbids us to think and speak harshly of the exterminated races. Besides, our poetry and our religion have given to the character of a shepherd a tone of peaceful contemplation and gentle goodness, not at all consistent with the life of men who tend their own flocks on the hills by day and steal those of their neighbours in the valleys by night.

We know, however, that the struggle between Rome and the Samnites began with efforts on the part of the former to check the incursions of the mountaineers.* The curtain falls at last, after a scene of plunder on one side, and cruelty on

* See Livy, b. vii.

the other, which is worthy of a place in the records of modern brigandage.

After the regular war had ceased, information reached the capital that some bandits, who had their nest in a cave, were committing depredations on the plains of Umbria. The Roman soldiers marched to the spot, and entered the cave with their banners flying. But, in the darkness of this retreat, they were unable to find their enemies, who poured upon them a shower of stones. The soldiers, finding another entrance to the cave, blocked up both openings with dry fuel, and having set it on fire, destroyed the enemy. Some perished by the heat, others were suffocated by the smoke, and the rest threw themselves desperately into the flames. According to Livy, two thousand bandits perished in this atrocious massacre.

These mountain tribes contributed not a little to the conquest by Rome of the rival cities in the plains. On the one hand, the constant depredations on the timid and luxurious inhabitants of the towns, drove these to seek shelter under the martial mantle of the Republic; and from protec-

tion Rome rapidly passed to conquest. Capua was at one time a city of so much wealth, enterprise, and luxury, that he must have been a prophet who could have predicted its inferiority to the military camp on the Tiber. But Capua, despised, and frequently assaulted by the armed shepherds of the Appennines, was compelled to ask protection of Rome. The matter ended in the subjection of Capua to her stronger sister.

On the other side, these same mountaineers did not scruple to ally themselves with Rome, as a means of devastating the cities of the plains. The Latins and Campanians having demanded equal privileges and rights in the Republic with the citizens of Rome (as in 1798 the people of Ferdinand I. asked political rights), the legions were sent among the Marsi and Peligni to collect warriors. The spoils of the cities of Latium and Campania were promised to the fierce mountaineers as a reward for their services against the rebels. This war ended in a Roman triumph at a battle fought on those same slopes of Vesuvius over which Cardinal Ruffo marched in 1799 with his army of the *Santa Fede*—probably not more

ragged or reckless than the allies of Manlius and Decius.

There is an incident of this Samnite war which has been ludicrously burlesqued in modern times. I allude to the disgraceful surrender of a Roman army at the Caudine Forks. Caius Pontius, the Samnite leader, sent some shepherds to inform the Romans that the city of Luceria, in the vicinity of the modern Arpaia, was besieged by the Samnites, and in danger of being captured. The shepherds offered to guide the Roman soldiers through the mountain passes which led to the besieged city. The legions set out under the deceitful guides. They were led into a narrow and deep valley, flanked on either hand by almost perpendicular heights whose summits were crowned with deep and dark woods. Suddenly the path was found blocked up in their faces by a mass of trees felled across it from rock to rock. The soldiers turned back, and found the entrace to the valley closed in the same way. Raising their eyes, they saw the mountain crests covered with armed men. Pontius had the Roman army in his power. His father advised him to

kill them all, or liberate them all without dishonour. The Samnite chief did neither. He humiliated the Romans by obliging them to pass under the yoke, and then liberated them on oaths and conditions, the religious sanctity of which Roman astuteness found means to break.* Gaetano Vardarelli would have managed it better.

Moving down into Calabria, we might go farther back, and inquire into the origin of these mountain tribes. For example, the Brutii were fugitive slaves of their Lucanian masters. It is not known whether injustice or the love of a free life led them to the hills; but once there, their numbers increased so rapidly, and their depredations upon their late masters were so frequent and serious, that the Lucanians were finally forced to recognize their independence. But not on this account did the Brutii cease to be the terror of the plains. Located in the region of Cosenza, in the fastnesses of the Southern Appennines, they waged a war of pillage and conquest on the Greek colonists along the sea and the Lucanians in the interior.

* See Livy, b. viii.

The Brutii were the constant enemies of Rome, most valuable allies of Pyrrhus and Hannibal, and their subjugation cost many a bloody struggle. Conquered at last, and reduced to the rank of slaves and menials, there is no reason to believe that the caves and heights of the Appennines did not continue to conceal the remnants of the terrible race, who continued to live on a scale less ambitious the life of their better days. In fact, two centuries later, when Catiline organized his conspiracy or rebellion, he relied for support not so much upon the discontented and vicious classes in Rome, as upon the inhabitants of the Central and Southern Appennines. The shepherd slaves of the cavaliers in Apulia and Brutium were ripe for a sanguinary revolt. All the savage heights of the mountains which encircle Rome were bristling with armed men.* The immense army which the gladiator Spartacus had collected in these mountain fastnesses, only six years before, must have influenced largely the plans of the

* Michelet. "History of the Roman Republic," vol. ii. p. 221.

conspirator, and may furnish the key to his hopes and Cicero's ill-concealed fears. It is admitted that Spartacus collected from slaves, gladiators, pirates, robbers, and assassins an army of seventy thousand men; that he defeated four consular armies, and might have sacked Rome itself, if he could have maintained discipline in so vast a collection of lawless men.

This great rising under Spartacus gives us a vivid glimpse of the life then led in the high valleys of these mountains. Hither fled all whose lives had become insecure in the cities, the remnants of those pirate bands who a few years before had spread desolation along the whole seaboard from the Tronto to Naples, the fierce gladiators, trained to bloody lives and sanguinary deaths for the delight of the Roman populace; the owners of small estates, dispossessed, and reduced to slavery or menial conditions by successive conquests and proscriptions; in fine, all who sought to escape from justice or from oppression. The great soul of Spartacus conceived the idea of collecting all these vaga-

bond masses to scourge the proud and bloody city with an army of its own victims.

Catiline had wider plans, which included the instruments so ably wielded, though vainly, by Spartacus. Catiline failed for want of time to organize his revolution: perhaps because he threw himself into the Tuscan rather than into the Calabrian Appennines, where Spartacus had waged such successful war with the legions of the Republic.

The causes which at this period had peopled the mountains with armed fugitive slaves, refugees from justice and disbanded soldiers, bear striking resemblance to those which, in modern times, have developed brigandage into a perennial plant, which grows with the leaves of every spring.*

Then, as now, the lands were held by a few. The labourer was called a slave, but his condition was substantially that of the modern terrazzani, cafoni, and proletari of the southern provinces. The provincial part of the nation was divided

* It is a Calabrian proverb, that the brigands grow with the leaves.

into two classes: a few proud and insatiable masters; many labourers living in abject misery, possessing absolutely nothing and having no real security for their own lives.* These men were the natural allies of Spartacus, as the ill-paid and wretched labourers of the Basilicata are to-day of Tristany and Crocco.

The wars of Marius and Sylla, the civil tempests which were shaking the power of the Republic to its foundations, had first created and then set free a vast number of soldiers trained to plunder. These disbanded veterans constituted the most valuable part of the army of Catiline. In the same way, in all the modern developments of brigandage into political importance, the disbanded soldier has been found a most troublesome and dangerous brigand. The reason is simple. In nine cases in ten he had been a brigand or common malefactor, before he became a soldier. Add to this, the almost universal injustice of the provincial authorities, and the exhaustless fountains of corruption which Rome contained within itself, and

* See note of G. Bandini on Eutropius, b. iv. c. vii.

diffused throughout the Italian peninsula, and we shall have, perhaps on a grander scale, but with the same compound of injustice and despotism, the picture of the Bourbon administration in these provinces. Under the Empire, slavery and the absorption of the lands of the many into the large estates of the few, contributed to increase the number of those who, fugitive in the mountains, sought to avenge upon society the vast and towering injustice under which they had groaned.

A grave historian enumerates six classes of people in the first three centuries of the Empire. The sixth and last class was made up of the fugitives who, to escape from oppression, took to the woods, and lived by robbery.*

In the country, the population consisted of two classes, colonists and slaves, "different rather in name than in actual rights."

The first class cultivated the lands according to established rules, paying for the most part in kind; but being separated by an immense distance from the proprietors, and depending im-

* Sismondi, "Fall of the Roman Empire," p. 29.

mediately upon some favourite slave or freed-man, they could not complain with any hope of being heard, and the laws gave them no protection. Their condition grew every day more desperate, for the rapacious demands of the superintendents grew larger with every day; and if, when the cup of their misery was full, they fled, leaving farm, house, family, and sought refuge with some other proprietor, they could be recovered, as American fugitive slaves in the happy times of James Buchanan. If such were the free colonists, what were the slaves? They were divided into two classes; those born on the estates, and those purchased. This last class was the most miserable of the human race. They toiled by day in chains, and slept by night in subterranean dungeons. Prisoners of war and the inhabitants of captured or rebellious cities, they had passed from freedom in their native lands to the lowest depths of slavery. There was a very active commerce throughout all the empire in these slaves, and the populations of entire cities were sometimes sold under the spear of the prætor.

This is cause.

Now let us look at the effect.

"The horrible sufferings of so great a part of the people,* awaking its mortal hate against its oppressors, had multiplied the revolts of the slaves, the plots, the assassinations, the poisonings. In vain a sanguinary law condemned to death all the slaves of an assassinated master. Vengeance and desperation continued to multiply crime. Those who succeeded in obtaining vengeance, or who had not been able to obtain it but had incurred suspicion, fled to the woods to pursue the life of robbers. Their assaults upon society sometimes almost took the character of a civil war rather than that of disorders by a band of highwaymen."

These fugitive slaves made no distinctions when they descended into the plain on their bloody incursions. The poor colonist, as well as the wealthy proprietor, fell a victim to their

* In Europe the peasant class is estimated at four-fifths of the population. In South Italy, under the Empire, deducting the mountain refugees, nine-tenths of the rural population must have been poor colonists and slaves.

rapacity and vengeance. The wealthy citizen, however, had means of defence. He could procure the armed protection of the Government.

On the other hand, the humble renter or proprietor, was obliged to submit without hope of remedy, to repeated incursions, which wasted his field, deprived him of his cattle, laid his house in ashes and left him without his wife and his daughters to weep over a hopeless ruin. He either abandoned his little estate altogether or sold it to some wealthy neighbour. In this way all semblance of a middle class in the country disappeared. The small proprietors and colonists, oppressed by the agents of the Government, the tax-farmers, the large proprietors and the bandits, yielded to their fate and sank out of sight in the vast class of *miserables* which lay groaning beneath them.

The only relief from the horrible servitude to which all classes of rural labourers were reduced, was found in escape to the free air and bold life of a bandit. The bravest fled and avenged on their suffering brethren, by midnight raids and

burnings, the intolerable wrongs inflicted by the constitution of the empire.

It is not my purpose to write the history of ancient brigandage. The exploits of mountain bandits are lost in the massacres, pillages and desolations wrought by armies marching under banners. Nor do the materials for this history exist. Of such trifles as the raids of a few mountaineers upon an unprotected village, the dignified voice of History does not condescend to speak. We know, however, that after the fall of the Empire of the West, the same causes, enduring with varying intensity, contributed to make the mountains sanctuaries alike of the guilty and of the innocent. The successive revolutions of government, which swept across these provinces between Julius Cæsar and the Spanish conquest of the Two Sicilies, contributed the same elements and the same results. The Appennines, under them all, extended their bosky mantle alike over fugitive crime and persecuted innocence—an asylum always safe, unless the fugitive attempted a regular war. Every region of the Old World has contributed its most daring, fierce, and rapa-

cious, as well as some of its bests spirits, to make up the mountain population of this part of the Italian peninsula. Asiatic, Carthagenian, Greek, Goth, and Saracen, have mingled their blood to make up the race which has never loved any king, and trusts its safety under the protection of no law. Their origin accounts for the rural Neapolitans, and nothing else will. This strong, robust race, who know no fear, respect no law, and call no man master, whose mothers are braver and stronger than the men of other lands, draw their blood from fountains out of which neither fear nor pity, nor any of the tender and gentle sentiments of human nature, were wont to flow.

We find brigandage mentioned in the earliest notices of the modern history of these provinces, and during the government by Spanish viceroys it is a constant feature of the times. The moment the historian casts his eye outside of the city of Naples, it falls upon this scourge of the provinces. Many of the viceroys fought the bandits, some claimed the merit of exterminating them. But when the trees put forth their leaves, the following spring, the woods were filled with new

hordes of brigands. Often they were not new. Brigandage begins in June, attracts the attention of the viceroy in August; an army is sent against it in September; there are many skirmishes in October and November; in December the general returns to Naples to report, for the hundredth time, that brigandage is extinguished in the provinces. The fact is, that the brigands have finished their campaign, and are living peacefully with their families in the scattered villages of the higher valleys. The peasants and shepherds, by necessity not by inclination, allies of the bandits, secrete the fugitives, or report them killed. They send the vice-regal troops on perilous and useless marches in search of men who can never be found, because they are no longer assassins and robbers but peaceful denizens of the towns.

A collection of all the notices which the history of the vice-regal government affords would be tiresome for its sameness. I select two periods separated by a century. In both these we shall find brigandage wearing its modern dress. I draw the materials for these notices from sources which are beyond suspicion—Botta's "History of

Italy," and the grave "*Storia Civile*," of Giannone. The first period embraces the last fifteen years of the sixteenth, the second the corresponding years of the seventeenth, century.

In 1585, when Pope Sixtus V. came to the Papal throne, he found his temporal empire groaning under the curse of brigandage. "Bandits and assassins were desolating that unhappy land. No longer a few persons scattered and apparently insignificant, they had become large bands numbering some hundreds; and, not content with infesting the open country, they stormed considerable villages and committed in them every species of crime. They had for chiefs and leaders not men of mean condition, but members of illustrious families, who, *the wars having ended*, were not able longer to exercise honourably their profession of arms, and from partisan contests had preserved the ferocity of bad warriors, while they had lost the generous instincts of good soldiers. The public authority had neither the means nor the courage to repress them, since they were powerful in numbers, and strong in their connections; the very judgments of the court were cor-

rupted by favour or suspended by terror. In fine, the state of Rome had become a nest of bandits and men of every kind of evil life."*

One of the causes of the vigour and daring of these bandits is said to have been, that the ill blood between Pope Gregory and the Grand Duke of Tuscany afforded them an opportunity to pass from one state to the other, as their interests or their safety dictated; in other words, they could rob Gregory's people until it ceased to be profitable, or became dangerous, and then throw themselves into Tuscany, to repeat the same deeds under another government.

Sextus V. set himself earnestly at work to repress brigandage, and we find much to admire in his policy. He began with his judicial functionaries. These gentlemen, whose knees had quaked before the threats of armed ruffians or the fear of the secret dagger, or whose palms had too often felt the touch of bribes, were given to understand that they must administer justice without fear or favour. "I will play with your heads if you disobey me, or fail to exercise your

* Botta, "History of Italy to 1789," b. xiv.

office justly and vigorously," said the fiery Pope. His next step was to establish a good understanding with the Grand Duke, and so put a stop to the perpetual migrations of the bandits from one state to the other.

Having made these dispositions within and without his kingdom, Sextus ordered a general chase, which resulted in what is called "the destruction of brigandage." Many of the bandits lost their lives on the scaffold, others fled into foreign countries, as far as possible from Sextus, seeing that they had to do with a man whose will was stronger than their ferocity.*

This extermination of brigandage, like those of more modern times, was only temporary. The Papal States continued to be troubled with bandits, and they reappear under Clement VIII.

At the same period, brigandage in the Neapolitan provinces took on a character of extreme gravity.

Benedetto Mangone and Marco Sciarra were famous leaders of brigands during the rule of the Viceroy, Count Miranda. The first rendered him-

* Botta, b. xiv.

self terrible to the population in the region of Eboli, and his fame survives in the traditions which nourish modern brigandage. He was captured by Miranda, and executed, after undergoing the most frightful tortures, by being revolved upon a wheel and broken with strokes of a hammer.* Sciarra belonged to the provinces of the Abruzzi. He had under him a company of six hundred robbers, and took the title "King of the Campagna." He maintained intimate relations with the bandits who scoured the States of the Church; and, when pressed by the soldiers of the Viceroy, took refuge in the papal dominions.

Sextus and Miranda entered into an arrangement by which the soldiers of each were allowed to pursue the brigands over the frontier. The two governments seem to have vied with each other in diligent and persevering hostility against the bandits, but without any important result.

The reason of their ill success is the same which makes the problem of the Italian Government in these provinces so difficult to-day.

These precautions and expeditions were use-

* Giannone, b. xxiv. c. v.

less, because, "through the favours lavished by Sciarra upon the inhabitants of the region in which he lived, he was faithfully warned of the ambuscades set for him by the *people of the court.** Besides, his vigilance was sleepless. He slept always in inaccessible heights, distributed guards, posted sentinels and stationed his small bands in places the most favourable and best known to himself."†

The Viceroy sent against Sciarra, Don Carlo Spinelli, with a force of four thousand cavalry and infantry, with instructions to exterminate this band. The daring bandit very nearly turned the tables on his foe. Spinelli narrowly escaped with his life, and Sciarra acquired additional fame. He sacked Serra Capriolo, Vasto and the city of Lucera. The bishop of this last city fled for safety into the bell-tower of the church; but having ventured to look out at the window, was shot in the head and killed.

The allianco between Sciarra and the bandits of the Papal States was stronger than that be-

* The soldiers of Victor Emanuel are called *Genti di Corte.*

† Giannone, b. xxxiv. c. v.

tween the Pope and the Viceroy. The latter were paralyzed by mutual suspicions and fears. The bandits had a perfect solidarity of feeling and interest. The military entirely failed to subdue Sciarra. He grew stronger and more troublesome with every campaign.

The Viceroy now resorted to an artifice. The Uscocchi were ravaging the territory of Venice, and all the efforts of the republic had failed to crush them. The Venetians were advised to employ Sciarra in this service, and they invited him to undertake the war. The bandit paid little attention to the invitation; probably because he found his present career entirely safe and quite as glorious as he desired.

On the death of Sextus and the accession of Clement, a more sincere alliance was formed between the two states, and Pope and Viceroy again undertook the work of extermination.

On the part of the Viceroy, Don Adriano Acquaviva was sent into the field. He accomplished what Spinelli had failed to do. He enrolled the local militia, won the hearts of the peasantry and organized a universal conspiracy against the

I quote from the grave and brief Giannone :—

"Leaving Naples on Palm Sunday, in 1592, with new troops, he added to his army bands of peasants, because these were better acquainted with the country; and, abstaining from quartering his soldiers on the population, he conciliated the hearts of the peasants to such a degree, that all united with him in the destruction of the bandits."*

Finding himself pressed on one side by the Pope, on the other by the Viceroy, and deprived of his supports among the peasantry, Sciarra accepted the invitations of Venice, embarked with sixty of his followers upon two galleys of the republic, and sailed away more like a conqueror than a common criminal.

He did not, however, relinquish his dominion in the Abruzzi. His companions, under the command of his brother, carried on there a brigand war on a smaller scale, but with considerable success, and their lives and property were probably as secure as those of any portion of the Italian people at that period. Sciarra frequently

* Book xxiv. c. v.

returned from Venice to encourage and aid his followers.

During one of these visits to his brother, Sciarra fell a victim to the envy or revenge of one of his subordinates, named Battitello, who received from the Papal general for the assassination of his master his own pardon and that of thirteen companions.

A story of Sciarra has been preserved, which true or false, has its value.

A poor traveller was one day brought bound into the presence of the chief.

"Well, sir," said Sciarra, "who are you?"

"Only a poor poet, Messer Marco."

"Very well, and your name?"

"Torquato Tasso, of Sorrento!"

"How! the author ——"

"Of the Gerusalemma Liberata," answered the prisoner, making a profound bow.

The band broke into rapturous applause. King Marco knelt and kissed the hand of the great and unhappy poet. Then he ordered his bundle to be restored, and accompanied him down into the plain.

The death of Sciarra led to the extermination of the band, and General Acquaviva returned to Naples with as much honour as if he had conquered a nation.

The cessation of brigandage was, however, partial and temporary. It continued under all the viceroys to be the pest and scourge of the provinces.*

We pass over a century of despotism, misrule and anarchy, to open the history of Naples at the year 1683. Don Gaspare de Haro, previously ambassador at the Court of Rome, assumed the vice-regal government in this year. Brigandage, universal in the provinces, was pushing its kingdom to the very gates of Naples.

The causes of this disorder were various, and it is not easy to group them into a picture. Naples and the other cities were full of idle, vagabond and thriftless people, who provided for their wants and desires by "thefts, homicides, assassinations and other crimes." In the provinces the vice-regal governors could afford no protection to the people, who secured it for

* See Giannone, b. xxiv. c. v., and b. xl. c. i.

themselves by paying taxes and contributions to the brigands. The bands were on excellent terms with their more peaceful neighbours, and no peasant would have dared to expose their retreats, much less to make any effort to destroy them. Nor was this the fault of the peasant. The brigand chief was his immediate sovereign, who at any moment could waste his little property and consign him and his family to torture and death. Good or bad, right or wrong, the bandit was king, and could exact obedience. The military excursions from Naples, which inspired the peasant with the hope of escape from his traditional master, always left him in a worse condition than they found him. The army remained during a few months, stimulated the poor victims of a double oppression to war upon the real king, and then went back to the city, leaving them to the vengeance of the bandits.*

Not less pernicious was one of the practices of the feudal system, which was existing in full vigour. The powerful barons kept in their service a class of men called bravos, whose brutal

* See Giannone, b. xl.

character and lawless life has been the theme of all the historical romances of Italy. We may read Manzoni, Guerrazzi, D'Azeglio, for mild portraits of these *sbirri*—pictures softened for the purposes of romance into some resemblance to modern, or rather to ordinary humanity. But if we would know what these men really were, how coarse, brutal and desperate, we must read the histories of their times.

This passage from Giannone affords a glimpse of them:—

"They inspired the weak with fear, sometimes by threatening them, often by disfiguring them and outraging them in a thousand other ways. They extorted by force whatever their whims dictated. They covered with their protection the most criminal persons; there was nothing in which they did not mix their intrigues, and force the weak to do their will. They compelled fathers to give their daughters in marriage to men of their choosing, and they prevented marriages which did not please them. In brief, they had reduced the citizens to a miserable slavery."

That was life in the city of Naples. Now look at the provinces:—

"The greater part of the bandits were sustained by the different barons and other powerful persons, who sheltered and fed them, and, by means of letters and messengers, warned them of the plans laid for their capture or destruction."

Haro published in 1683 a promise of pardon to those bandits who should inform against or kill their leaders and companions. He extended the principle of this edict to all the armed rascals of the kingdom. The object of this decree was to destroy the solidarity among the bandits themselves, to demoralize them by introducing suspicion and treachery into the very camp of the outlawed chiefs.

The death of Sciarra, a hundred years before, and our knowledge of the character of the times, tend to prove that the measure was not likely to be attended with ill success.

In the following year, Haro added to this a decree, by which he endeavoured to break up the intimate relations between the bandits and the rest of his subjects. He forbade, under severe

penalties, all correspondence with the brigands. It became an offence punishable with death to give them a morsel of food, or information respecting the troops of the Viceroy. Those who received, for any purpose, any portion of the gains of the bandits to be given to other parties; provided them with powder, arms, or other means of keeping the country; or instigated them to acts of violence, incurred the penalty of death at the discretion of the judge. The testimony of two bandits was sufficient to condemn these accomplices.

Nor were these idle threats. Haro seems to have been the Manhès of his time. He spread dismay among the brigands by detaching a considerable portion as informers; and he alarmed the barons in their castles by a system which suspended their lives on the evidence of any couple of bandits whom they might have befriended, or whose spoils they might have shared.

The next step was a campaign against the bands. This contest assumed almost the dimensions of a civil war. The bandits took refuge in castles and other fortified places, against which Haro was obliged to employ artillery. Once cap-

tured, these towers and forts were utterly destroyed. The brigands fled into the mountains of the Abruzzi, and carried on their depredations from bases less accessible to the artillery of Haro.

The Viceroy, finding that, though he had swept brigandage from the open country, and greatly weakened its hold upon the fears of the people, it was still a dominant power in the Abruzzi, put a price upon the head of every bandit in hiding, while he repeated the promise of pardon to those who should kill their chiefs and companions. It was not necessary to bring the bandit into the military post alive. His head served the same purpose and secured the same reward.

The virtue of the brigands was not proof against the temptation. It was a new branch of their trade, with perhaps larger profits and the superadded favour of the government.

All suppressions of brigandage show that these robbers like, once in a while, to wipe out the old record, and begin life anew. They are ready to accept amnesties, and to lead quiet lives for a few months, in order to obliterate the black

catalogue of crime which they have written. If the Italian Government of to-day could imitate the Viceroy Haro by offering a reward for the head of every bandit, to be paid to whomsoever should present it at the nearest military post, adding a pardon if the legalized assassin were himself a brigand, brigandage could easily be exterminated—every autumn.

Haro added the most imperative instructions to his civil and military subordinates, and, in short, organized the provinces into a general revolt against brigandage.

The success of these measures was such that Haro acquired the fame of having exterminated the evil. What he actually accomplished was to reduce brigandage to the ordinary dimensions from which it had swollen during the government of his feeble predecessors.

This scourge of society continued in the Neapolitan provinces under the Bourbon kings. So long as it did not assume extraordinary proportions, the Government gave little attention to its ravages. But, in 1713, the King issued a proclamation, in which he stated that robbery on the

highways and in the sparsely settled districts was universal and constant; that persons were frequently obliged to pay ransoms to liberate themselves from the hands of assassins; that every species of crime and disorder abounded; that there was no security for the internal commerce of the kingdom, and that it was unsafe for the agriculturist to attempt gathering the fruits of the earth.

This was the happy kingdom of Ferdinand before the French revolutionists or the *Piedmontese* had attempted to disturb its felicity.

The measures adopted by Ferdinand for the suppression of this brigandage were so vigorous as to awaken in the breasts of his subjects the sense of injustice; but not sufficiently firm, equal and enduring to repress the evil.

1. He advised travellers and merchants to travel always in companies, and always armed.

2. He promised pardon to all malefactors who should voluntarily return to obedience.

3. He ordered the local authorities to arrest or kill those who continued to infest the highways and campagna.

4. He sent a brigadier-general, with full powers, into the provinces, to assist the governors in the work of suppression.*

It does not appear that any remarkable success attended these efforts. The brigands were invested with the character of honest men by a decree which pardoned them for the grossest crimes on the sole condition of returning to obedience; and the material weakness of the government was proclaimed, while its moral authority was prostrated. The brigands perceived that they had to do with a king who cared little for the prosperity of his provinces, and had no inflexible determination to make life and property safe throughout his dominions. The very attempt of Ferdinand to repress the brigands increased their number, and prepared the way for the horrors of 1799.

* See Colletta, b. ii. c. xxii.

CHAPTER II.

BRIGANDAGE AND THE PARTHENOPEAN REPUBLIC.

Review of the political situation—Errors of the revolutionists—The lazzarone Pazzo—Fra Diavolo—Mammone—Bishop Francesco Serao murdered by brigands and avenged by Niccolo Addone—The false prince—Cardinal Ruffo—Character of his army—Sack of Cotrone—The Cardinal loses his army—Sack of Altamura—The brigands Panedigrano and Pansanera—A thousand convicts transformed into valorous men—The women of Altamura get back their property—The sack of a convent of virgins—The Arch-priest Rinaldi—Horrible scenes in Naples—Breach of faith—The terrible vengeance of Ferdinand and Caroline—A characteristic negotiation with the hangman of Naples—Admiral Caracciolo—Execution of Pagano, Cirillo, Conforti, Manthoné, and Scotti.

THE French revolution, so extravagant, frenzied and bloody, so barren of immediate popular benefits, sowed over the soil of Europe the seeds of constitutional freedom, which, after three-fourths of a century, are beginning to promise fruit. Feudalism made the subject and his goods the

property of his baronial lord; the monarchies which destroyed the feudal system brought the subject into the same relation to the crown which he had held to the feudal despot; it was left to the French revolution to initiate the doctrine that man is neither serf nor subject, but belongs of right to himself. One century may not suffice to reconstruct the Christian world upon the basis of this political creed; for the education of the people and the destruction of feudal ideas are the work of generations. But it is certain that the basis of the great struggle which convulses our society is the conflict of these opposing theories, on the one side the rights of crowns, on the other the rights of man. The aspirations of peoples battle with the ambitions of princes. These hostile elements may be reconciled for temporary purposes, and, while the ground is being prepared, just minds will not desire to prematurely hasten a harvest in which humanity has an eternal stake. But the battle must be waged for the protection of the tender blade, while assiduous culture of the people prepares it to gather the full corn in the ear.

The initiative of the revolution of 1789 was comprehended by liberal minds throughout Italy. Those of the lettered and commercial classes who had the misfortune to be the property of the Bourbons were among the first to feel, as a sentiment, the new doctrine, and to prepare to greet the aurora of the new day. They had a thousand arguments, drawn from their own observation, their own sufferings and their own degradation, with which to enforce their demands for a change in the government; but a revolution, modelled on the pattern of that of Paris, could scarcely have found a less congenial soil in Madagascar. There was no powerful middle class possessed of intelligence and property, to initiate, organize and sustain liberty.

Sagacious absolutists had comprehended, before the French revolutionists announced their splendid dream, that the growth of the middle classes, educated and prosperous, was a menace for the feudal inheritance over which kings reigned. The neglect of popular education, the sufferance of popular vices, the oppression of commerce, and the ban put upon the press, were

instinctive, if not studied, efforts to resist the growth of that class which now rules in nearly all the cabinets of Europe. In Naples the outlines of this policy were traced with remarkable distinctness in the whole history of the Bourbon dynasty. The plebs* and the throne were in constant alliance; the lettered *bourgeois* always suspected, depressed and persecuted. There was freedom to be filthy, ignorant and vicious; honesty, learning and prosperous industry were causes for suspicion, purchase, or imprisonment.

The army of the French Republic under Bonaparte was professedly sent into Italy to further the progress of the new ideas, and to realize the hopes of Italians. Bonaparte was on the eve of becoming master of the army and of the nation; but during this period of transformation he spoke the language, and encouraged the aspirations of the time. Ferdinand of Naples might have saved his humiliating flight to Sicily and the

* Lest my readers may regard the use of this word as an affectation, I remind them that no one English word fully describes the lower classes in Naples. For a similar reason, *bourgeois* is used in this work to describe the middle class in South Italy.

blood of thousands of his people, if he had not, by repeated treacheries and violations of faith, provoked the French to open war. The clubs of patriots in Naples invited the French soldiers as deliverers, and, while the troops of the Republic marched into the kingdom, made diligent efforts to organize revolution within the capital. These efforts must have been fruitless but for the foreign force which came to their aid. If the revolution could have enrolled the entire middle class, it would have remained a hopeless minority; but the extravagance of the patriots, and fear of the government, kept back from their ranks all those who had fortunes to lose, or distrusted the hot zeal of beardless republican orators and conspirators. Whoever would have a convincing proof that the world moves, may profitably contrast this revolution of '98 with that of 1860.

The Tacitus of Italian historians has finely contrasted the Neapolitan and French revolutions. If we substitute for France the Naples which welcomed Garibaldi, the contrast will need little modification.

"The great merits of the French revolution,

were not appreciated or even perceived by our people. This difference alone should have suggested diversity of governments in the two states, but there were other contrasts not less important. France had revolted—Naples had *been* revolted. In France, the transit from a despotic government to a republic had been the work of three years; in Naples of a day. In France, political wants found voice in popular tumults; in Naples these popular risings were unknown, or, at least, wanting, at this period. In France these clamours of the nation stimulated revolution and secured its success. In Naples it was necessary to search for, or rather to awaken, a popular will before any advance could be made in satisfying it."*

During the night of the 21st of December, 1798, Ferdinand I. abandoned Naples, and, embarking on an English vessel of war, took refuge in Sicily.

The French troops were before Capua, the revolutionary party active; but, in spite of the long series of wrongs suffered, the people were

* Colletta, "Storia," b. iv. c. iii.

still loyal. The conduct of Ferdinand in abandoning Naples was pusillanimous and treacherous, but though the king was a fugitive, the people, without the moral support of the crown, or the assistance of its representatives, so bravely resisted the French, that it was only on the 23rd of January, 1799, that General Championnet entered the city; and then the corpses of a thousand Frenchmen and three thousand Neapolitans strewed the streets. Nor was the victory due alone to force of arms. The *coup de main* of that conflict was the patronage of San Gennaro by the French general. A certain Michele il Pazzo, a lazzarone, had been elected, in a tumultuous assemblage, one of the plebeian leaders. He seems to have been one of those astute brutes which the plebs of that period produced in abundance to reinforce the ranks of the camorra and brigandage.

The French having obtained possession of the forts on the 22nd, Championnet asked a parley of the Royalists, and besought the people in the name of San Gennaro to cease a useless resistance. Pazzo, with the facility and

shrewdness of his tribe, recommended to the French general that a guard of honour be sent to the saint. The general consented, and two companies of the grenadiers marched to the cathedral, followed by Pazzo, and his companions, crying, "Viva the French, who show respect to San Gennaro." The artifice was crowned with complete success.*

The Parthenopean Republic was organized by men ignorant of state affairs, and even of the geography of the territory which they ruled.† The King was in Sicily, the partisans of royalty secretly active in the capital, and exercising full control over the minds of the rural population, who, so far from sympathizing with, did not even comprehend, the revolution. Even in the capital, the masses could not understand the privileges with which the doctrines of liberty and equality had endowed them.

* Colletta, "Storia," b. iii. c. xlvi.

† Speaking of the new division of the territory of the Republic into departments and cantons, Colletta says:—"Names were misplaced and exchanged. A mountain was believed to be a city, and made the capital of a canton. The territory of one commune was thrown into different cantons, while some rivers were duplicated, and entire districts omitted."

There is a ludicrous side to this mournful passage of modern history. Pazzo had become the mouthpiece of the government in its addresses to the populace, who did not even know the language of their *bourgeois* fellow-citizens. His harangues were marked by that shrewdness which distinguishes the Neapolitan populace. He was once interrupted by the question—

"What does citizen mean?"

"I don't know," replied the orator, "but it must be a good name, for the *capezzoni* (heads of the state) have taken it for themselves."

Another inquired—

"What do you mean by equality?"

He pointed to the uniform of a French colonel which he wore, and replied, "It must mean lazzarone and colonel. The gentlemen were colonels in the womb; I became one through equality. Once men were born to greatness, now a man becomes great."

The commissions sent into the rural district to organize them on the new system, were accompanied by orators, whose business was to demo-

cratize populations who could neither read nor understand the Italian tongue. They found a few sincere partisans and a large number of men disgusted with despotism, anxious to wreak private vengeance, or hopeful of reward under the Republic. The commissions had offices and contracts to distribute; and thousands of men in the provinces, longing for any new system or seduced by the golden promises of the orators, accepted the change of masters. Still, when the most liberal allowance has been made for all these adhesions, it must be admitted that the revolution was neither accepted nor rejected by the rural districts.

It was a rare occasion for the professional brigands. The old order was shaken, but not fallen; the new only nominally dominant. The partisans and emissaries of Ferdinand encouraged brigandage as a means of discrediting the government, cutting off its communications, and exhausting its military strength in hopeless but perpetual struggles with insignificant bands of robbers, kidnappers and assassins. If other proof were wanting, the suddenness with which

these marauding bands appear on the pages of the history of the ephemeral republic would demonstrate that an existing practice was stimulated to an increased activity. Brigandage was not a partisan warfare; it was arson, pillage and beastly barbarities, on a larger scale, but with the motives which stimulate men to crime throughout the world. Brigandage increased on the principles of supply and demand. The liberals and the French had all become the legitimate booty of these servants of Ferdinand. All pretence of restraint was removed. The priest counselled, blessed and absolved the bloody-handed "servants of the church and the king." The power of the republic was too feeble to afford any protection to its friends. This was the great harvest of the brigands.

The character of the men who led these hordes of assassins shows clearly the motives which collected and held them together. They figure in Bourbon histories under the titles of colonel and general; but there is scarcely one whose previous crimes had not subjected him to condemnation, or rendered it necessary for him

to take up his residence in the woods and mountains.

In the Abruzzi, the chiefs were Pronio and Rodio. The first was originally an ecclesiastic, but his genius conducted him to a profession more consistent with his ambition. He was first a retainer, bearing the baronial arms of the Marquis Vasto. He was guilty of homicide, was condemned to the galleys, escaped and became a brigand. In the early part of 1798, he was gathering such poor booty as peaceful times afford. In 1799 he became a partisan leader for the cause of Ferdinand.

Rodio, on the contrary, seems to have been a partisan leader and nothing more. The chief object of his expeditions was to restore the fugitive monarch to the throne; but most of his companions aimed at plunder and blood.

The Terra di Lavoro was pillaged and sacked by Fra Diavolo and Mammone. Fra Diavolo has become famous among these robber chieftains. Scribe and Auber have made him the subject of one of their best melodramas. He was born at Itri, of poor parents, living by daily labour. His

name is given by all the writers of the time as Michele Pezza, and his surname is accounted for in various modes. Colletta says it is a proverb of the Neapolitan lower classes that the priests and the devil are invincible. In the crimes which distinguished his boyhood and prepared him for honourable service under the Bourbons, Pezza was so uniformly successful that his companions complimented his valour and fortune by the title of Friar Devil. Others tell us that he was originally designed for the Church, and acquired his title while he wore the cassock. It is certain that the name was given him in his native village, and that he himself, proud of a title which indicated the cunning of a priest and the malice of the devil, continued to retain it after his talents for murder had attracted the attention of the sovereign of the Two Sicilies.

He was a homicide and a robber, scoured the mountains for two years with a price put by proclamation upon his head, and had become at once the admiration and terror of his compatriots before the revolution opened for him a field in which he acquired an immortality of infamy.

When the revolution broke out, Fra Diavolo and his brothers collected a band and waylaid couriers, officers and small detachments of troops passing between Naples and Rome.

General Championnet confessed that this band gave him more difficulty than any division of the royalist army.

The horrible cruelties related of him surpass belief. Among these incidents, it is said that some officers fell into his hands during an engagement. He caused them to be bound to trees and burned alive, while the inhabitants of neighbouring villages danced around this *auto-da-fé*.

He had now acquired fame, and visited his royal master to receive honours and particular instructions. His reception was of the most flattering character. The king made him a brevet-captain; the queen marked her admiration and gratitude by placing upon his finger a beautiful emerald ring. The ring is preserved in the family of his son, the Cavalier Pezza, who receives from the king of Italy the pension which Ferdinand settled upon Fra Diavolo.

He re-entered the Terra di Lavoro to continue

his partisan warfare; but he was a born brigand, and went to such lengths of cruelty and rapacity that Cardinal Ruffo refused him permission to enter Gaeta, and informed the king of the nature of Pezza's exploits.

The king responded in these words:—

"I approve your refusal to permit Fra Diavolo to enter Gaeta, as he wished. I admit that he is a brigand chief, but I must also admit that he has served us well. It is then necessary to use him, and not to displease him. At the same time, it is necessary to persuade him that he must keep the rein of discipline over himself and his people, if he really wants to acquire favour with me."

After the taking of Naples by the royal party, the queen announced to him his appointment as colonel. The letter is said to have contained a lock of her majesty's hair. After the return of Ferdinand, he retained his rank, and obtained a life pension of three thousand ducats, with the title of Duke of Cassano. We shall find him, with a higher military rank, in the next chapter.

The character and deeds ascribed to Mammone are too horrible to be believed, if they were not attested by a contemporaneous historian, and confirmed by the uniform tradition of his native village. He was born at Sora, and from his earliest youth manifested the tastes of a cannibal. The inhabitants of this village assert that he had from boyhood such a thirst for blood, that he hung about the butchers' stalls for an opportunity to put his mouth to the gashed throats of bullocks and swine. These traditions, even though not literally exact, have a substantial truth. They show the impressions which this monster left upon those who were nearest to his person.

The passage from Vincenzo Cuoco, which is quoted by most of the subsequent historians, is as follows:—

"Gaetano Mammone, originally a miller, afterwards a general-in-chief of the insurgents of Sora, is a horrible monster, whose equal it is difficult to find. During two months of command in a small region of country, he caused three hundred and fifty unfortunates to be shot, besides perhaps double that number killed by his satel-

lites. We do not speak of sackings, deeds of violence, and conflagrations. We do not speak of the horrible prisons into which he plunged the unhappy people who fell into his hands, nor of the new kinds of death which he devised. He renewed the inventions of Mezentius and Procrustes. He was so fond of human blood that he drank to the last drop that of the victims whose throats he cut. He who writes these lines has seen him, after being bled, drink his own blood and that of others bled at the same time. When he dined, he always had upon his table a human head, freshly severed, and he habitually drank from a human skull. To this monster our Ferdinand wrote from Sicily, '*My general and my friend.*'"

It is said that after the restoration in '99 he retired upon a pension of three thousand ducats assigned to him by Ferdinand, but his subsequent history and the time or manner of his death are unknown.

In the Basilicata, the wildest confusion reigned. Families, villages or communes raised the banner of the Republic or of the Bourbon, not

from any political sympathies, but solely on grounds of personal or sectional jealousies and enmities. The life-long brigands found their account in this disorder. They sacked and murdered with impunity. There were daily conflicts, and assassinations were even more frequent.

One of the incidents of this social war illustrates the fierceness of a large portion of this population. Francesco Serao was a bishop at Picerno. He had been obnoxious to the Papal See for Jansenist opinions, and had been sustained by the Bourbon government. At this period, he was suspected of being a friend of the Republic, and the Bourbonists suddenly discovered that he was also a heretic. His house was assailed, he was dragged from his knees before the cross into the street; there he was brutally murdered, and his head carried upon the point of a lance around the town. The crime was committed by several plebeians of brigand blood. Niccolo Addone, a rich devotee of the Church and a secret friend of the Republic, resolved to avenge the death of the bishop. He availed himself of treachery, feigned to be delighted at the fate of the bishop,

and invited the murderers to a banquet in honour of their exploit. They came, drank deep, and became incapable of self-defence. Addone killed them all, principally with his own hand.* The partisans of the Republic were disgusted at this terrible vengeance; and Addone, finding no support and being exposed to the rage of the Bourbonists, fled into France. In his old age, the same man was a violent partisan and political informer of the Second Ferdinand.

Though these conflicts bore no resemblance to a regular war, they were swollen beyond the ordinary limits of brigandage. Men like Addone glutted their revenge, the retainers of the Bourbons sacked the houses of the republicans, and the nights were illuminated with burning villages, fired by the malice of peasant bands. But underneath these violent deeds the brigand collected booty and satiated his thirst for blood.

In Apulia, four Corsicans acquired a place in history by an astute stratagem, through which they loaded themselves with spoil. Their names were De Cesare, Bocchiciampe, Corbara and

* Colletta, b. iv. c. xii.

Colonna. The first had been a servant in livery, the second a soldier and deserter, Colonna and Corbara were rogues by profession—and all were fleeing from Corsica to escape punishment. They had intended to embark for Corfu, but meeting by chance with a certain Gironda, the genius of the Apulian devised a brilliant scheme to promote their fortunes. Corbara took the part of Prince Francesco, the heir to the throne; Colonna figured as an officer of the royal household; Bocchiciampe as a brother of the King of Spain; and De Cesare as Duke of Saxony. With this fraud, they raised the provinces in favour of the king. They levied and collected taxes, and made a triumphal march to Otranto—the false prince everywhere receiving a more implicit obedience than real ones ordinarily obtain from their people.

The credulity of the masses and the concurrence of bishops and archbishops, of barons and Bourbon officers, in this deception are alike wonderful. Nor does the marvel stop here. While they were at Taranto, a vessel arrived bearing into Sicily the ex-princesses of France; and these proud ladies stooped to receive with

honour the false prince, and to encourage the popular delusion.

The effect of this deception was immense. The presence of the prince implied that the king was about to be restored. Besides, the presence of royalty never fails to inflame the enthusiasm of the Neapolitan masses. The artifice restored one-third of continental Sicily to the King. Corbara having filled his pockets, naturally desired to escape. He issued a proclamation appointing the brother of the King of Spain and the Duke of Saxony viceroys in his absence, and departed with Colonna, ostensibly for Sicily. Encountering a pirate at sea, he lost his riches with his life.*

The French and the republicans were reckoned enemies alike of the Pope and of Ferdinand. It was natural that as the contest went on, the priests, who had in some instances favoured the Revolution, should take position in solid phalanx against the Republic. They were everywhere, spoke in the name of religion, and

* Colletta. Other authorities say that he arrived safely in Sicily.

had supreme control over an immense majority of the rural population. Disorder was producing its legitimate fruits. The wavering partisans of liberal ideas began to clamour against a government which could give no protection to its citizens, which was only powerful to awaken a hostility it could not subdue.

The prisons disgorged their foul contents all over the land. Disbanded soldiers of the late Bourbon army, bravos trained to crime in the baronial service and peasants who had now no other means of subsistence, roamed the country in every direction, their lines of march indicated by corpses and fires. The clergy, the Bourbonists and the brigands, were in full revolt against the liberty, equality and fraternity of the French utopians.

These heterogeneous elements found a fitting leader in Cardinal Ruffo, who, in his purple robes, led armed bands, made up of the collected human filth of the kingdom, against the "enemies of the holy faith."

This man sprang from noble but corrupt stock. He had great natural cunning and audacity, but,

though a cardinal, was ignorant of letters and science. In his youth he led a free life, and as far as nature permitted his old age was equally licentious. His family was poor; he himself was a spendthrift, and naturally took the rich and easy road of the prelacy in his youth. Pius VI. was pleased with the young profligate, gave him several successive employments, and at last elevated him to the office of Treasurer of the States of the Church. Ruffo gained wealth so rapidly that he incurred the suspicion of the Papal court, and was removed from the treasury. The Pope long resisted the overthrow of his favourite, but at last yielded, saying, "I will remove him, but he shall be a cardinal."*

Ruffo returned to Naples with riches, powerful friends acquired through prodigality of public money, and the prospect of the purple. In the meantime, he obtained from Ferdinand the office of Intendente of the royal house at Caserta. In 1791 he became a cardinal and returned to Rome to assist the Pope in the straits of revolution.

* I quote this story from Sacchinelli, Ruffo's secretary and biographer.

In spite of his efforts, the Papal government fell, and Ruffo took refuge under the protection of the royal fugitive already in Palermo.

Ruffo furnished Ferdinand the most powerful aid to his restoration. He found the imbecile tyrant shivering with dread of assassins and traitors. The court breathed nothing but distrust of all the subjects, nobles and barons on the mainland. Every message from the provinces inviting the king to return to the arms of his faithful people, was regarded as a plot against his life. Ferdinand had purchased so many patriots, had plotted with success so many conspiracies against obnoxious individuals, had lived so long speaking lies and practising deceit, that he retained no confidence in man. This was the case with the queen and his whole court. Ruffo carried to Palermo the same vices that disfigured his master, but he had courage, audacity and inventive genius. He pointed out to the trembling court that republicanism had no firm hold on the provinces, that religious opinions were stronger than any others in Naples, and that the kingdom contained many true and

powerful friends of Ferdinand, through whom a reaction could be fomented. Even Ruffo, who proposed to risk his own life on the venture, was not believed. The French princesses arrived in the meantime at Palermo, and reported that the popular movement produced by the false prince had been real and extended; that in Apulia the royal cause was really dominant. Ruffo was now permitted to enter the provinces and organize reaction "*in the name of the holy faith.*" The cardinal took with him few followers and less money; but he had unlimited authority and boundless promises. He was received as an ally by the priests, the nobility and the partisans of the king. The people, without political opinions, were enraptured at the sight of the purple robes of a cardinal. It was the next thing to a sight of the Madonna herself. In fact, miracles were wrought in honour of the event. Wooden images of the holy mother opened their eyes, and crucifixes were wet with fresh blood of her Son, in sign of favour to the elect defender of the sacred cause of religion. A great number of disbanded soldiers and escaped convicts who

were roaming over the country as brigands,* offered themselves as warriors for the Church and the King.

The cardinal soon had a tumultuous crowd of followers—a mob rather than an army. His astuteness saved him from attempting at first any approach to a legitimate war. He began by proclaiming that the citizens faithful to the king should be exempt for six years from taxes, and should besides be entitled to unlimited gains from the confiscated goods of rebels and the republican villages put at ransom. These were to be the earthly rewards of royalty; he added celestial delights for obedience, and eternal pains for rebellion.

The rabble took up its line of march as a disorderly religious procession. They tore down the trees of liberty, set up crosses in their place, entered villages and visited churches with the most sacred forms and ceremonies of the Roman

* Colletta, "Storia," b. iv. c. xv. Sacchinelli in his biography says; "Unfortunately there were among these troops assassins and robbers impelled by thirst for rapine, vengeance, and blood," p 95.

Church, the cardinal in his purple blessing the people and their arms.

It is not my purpose to follow the cardinal through this singular expedition. He landed at Bagnara on the 8th of February, and Naples capitulated to the forces under his command on the 23rd of June. He owed his success in some measure to the aid of Turks, Russians and English, allied with Ferdinand against the French, in some degree also to the incapacity for government of the men elevated to the control of the Republic; but his expedition would have been impossible without the brigands and the underlying conditions out of which brigandage grows.

There are two episodes of this march which illustrate its whole character: Cotrone and Altamura. The account which I give is taken from Sacchinelli, the biographer of Ruffo, who declares that he writes his book to relieve the reputation of the cardinal from the aspersions of Botta, Coletta and Cuoco.

From Catanzaro, the Vicar-general of Ferdinand despatched two thousand men to blockade and reduce Cotrone, selecting for the undertaking

his *irregular* troops, that is to say, those bands of peasants and mountaineers whom he made no pretence of enrolling in the army. This corps was under the command of a certain Lieutenant-colonel Perez, but he was accompanied by an assassin named Pansanera, to whose counsels the utmost deference was to be paid.

"Pansanera was famous for ten or twelve homicides, for which the cardinal, in view of the services which he could render, had given him absolution." Let no one imagine that Pansanera was still a brigand and an assassin. He was simply "a brand plucked from the burning."

Cotrone is one of the oldest towns on the Italian side of the Ionian sea. It was the capital of one of the republics of Magna Grecia, seat of the school of Pythagoras, and birthplace of the famous Milo. It was destroyed by Pyrrhus, afterwards taken by Hannibal, and in turn by the Romans who planted in it a Roman colony. It is to-day a village containing a population of about seven thousand souls.

At the beginning of the revolution, the royal garrison had gone over to the service of the

Republic, and its commandant had been imprisoned as a royalist; a certain Captain Ducarne, previously imprisoned as a republican, being released and placed in command.

In the army which assaulted Cotrone, Perez was nominal commander, to give some colour of legality to the sack which was contemplated from the beginning. The cardinal was at Catanzaro, to avoid being held personally responsible for the crime. Pansanera was the leader; the soldiers were brigands and peasants intent upon plunder.

The two thousand, swelled to double that number by new bands attracted by the smell of booty, took position before the town.

Pansanera began by summoning the place to surrender. The inhabitants understood perfectly well that this was an invitation to permit their throats to be cut without resistance. The bearer of the summons was arrested and condemned to death as a known brigand. The rabble before the city was without artillery, and could not have subdued a walled town except by a long siege, for which they must have wanted patience; but the coveted prize was put into their hands by

an ill-advised sortie of the republicans. Pansanera received them in an ambuscade, drove them back upon the gate, and pursued them into the town. The garrison now changed sides again and hoisted the royal standard, their old commander was liberated, and Ducarne found himself once more a prisoner. The vicissitudes of these two men are a picture of that year of grace, 1799.

Crotone was abandoned to a desolating sack, which in four days reduced it to a smoking ruin.

The cardinal had overshot the mark. The object sought had been attained; a terrible example had been given to republican cities, the clamour of his irregular troops had for a moment been hushed, and notice had been given to all the brigands of the kingdom that substantial rewards were to be had in the Bourbon service. On the other hand, however, those who were loaded down with spoils wished to return to their homes in order to secrete their gains, and those who had been so unfortunate as not to share in the sack murmured against their leader.

The cardinal arrived at Cotrone with the main

body of his army on the fourth day of the pillage. The night before, the greater part of the army of two thousand men, including its heavy reinforcement between Catanzaro and Cotrone, had disappeared. The cardinal found only Pansanera and a few of his companions. The rest of this force had gone to hide the jewels, plate, and money, gained in the service of his Most Christian Majesty, the King of the Two Sicilies. The main army now began to follow the example of Pansanera's cut-throats. They informed the cardinal that they could not remain longer in his service. They suddenly remembered that their families were in danger; that the cardinal had not been able to supply them with food; that the season was cold; and that the service of the King was hard and unprofitable. In spite of the utmost efforts of Ruffo and his faithful Pansanera, the greater part of the army deserted. A force of twenty thousand men was reduced in two days to scarcely one-fourth of that number.

All promised to return, and it is probable that many did so, for on the 5th of April the

cardinal set out on his march to Altamura with seven thousand men.

This army received a reinforcement of a novel character—nothing less than a thousand convicts released from the prisons of Sicily, and organized into a regiment under the command of Panedigrano, another assassin transformed into a saint by the miracle-working cardinal. Sacchinelli's account of this affair is so ingenious, that I cannot forbear translating it. The reader should remember that the writer is defending Ruffo from the aspersions of Botta and Colletta.

"The English, in order to relieve the government of Sicily from the expense of maintaining the great number of convicts in that and the other islands, and acting upon a mistaken notion that they might be rendered useful to the public cause, transported them to the coasts of Calabria, and disembarked them, with the recommendation to acquire merit and honour in the war which was waging. These highwaymen, many of whom were Calabrians intent upon private vengeance, all of whom were bloody footpads, abandoned themselves to the most horrible excesses, espe-

cially massacreing the local authorities, and sacking houses and villages."

It will be seen that the responsibility of this affair is neatly transferred to the shoulders of the English. It is sufficient to reply, that if Ferdinand reigned in Sicily he had control of the prisons. If he did not reign in Sicily, Ruffo was nothing more nor less than a brigand.*

This importation of brigands alarmed the cardinal; there were assassins enough on the mainland. But the genius of Ruffo turned the evil into a blessing to the cause, and converted this unpromising human clay into brigadier-generals and saints. Sacchinelli proceeds:—

"The public order was already disturbed; anarchy began to raise its head. The disorder and peril increased, when the companies of irregular troops became anxious to go home to defend their families and houses."

It will be seen that the new supply of brigands

* There is a letter of Ferdinand to Ruffo, lamenting the mistake the English had made in launching these convicts upon "his faithful Calabrians." The King had given orders that they should be sent to the coast of Gaeta, where he had fewer friends and more enemies.

had no political prejudices, sacking royalists and republicans with perfect impartiality. It will be seen, too, that the cardinal was again threatened with the loss of his army. Now shines out the saintly genius of Ruffo:—

"The cardinal never seemed so superior to himself as in this critical moment. Without loss of time, he ordered the army to be intrenched in Corigliano, under the command of his brother, the inspector-general. In order to prevent desertion, he surrounded the army with the cavalry corps, and the baronial sheriffs and retainers. He then exhorted the ecclesiastics and chaplains of the army (who had great influence, especially with the irregular troops) to employ their persuasive powers, in order to maintain order and subordination."

In few words, he imprisoned his own army, and set the priests at work to transform the rabble into soldiers. Probably most military men will agree that it was a stroke of genius.

"He mounted his horse, at the head of a good company of cavalry, and attended by the bishop of Cariati, and many gentlemen proprietors, who

had influence in the several districts, and had been called by the bishop as a suite for the cardinal, he set out on a tour through the province. By the use of gentleness, with assurances and promises, he succeeded admirably, and, in a very short time, recalled to obedience, and united in one body a thousand of these convicts. He put this corps under the command of Niccola Gualtieri, *alias* Panedigrano; who, being also a pardoned bandit, gave great aid in this operation. This man, having served in the camp of San Germano, was acquainted with the military service, and rendered great aid in the taking of the capital, as will hereafter appear." *

Panedigrano had fifteen acts of larceny and ten homicides to expiate. He received a *liberal* allowance of pay, and, in command of his thousand cut-throats, was sent off on a delicate mission.

On the Tyrrhene shore the English naval forces and the clerical party had fomented a reaction. Both were clamorous that the cardinal should march by that route directly upon Naples. Ruffo, who had an army imprisoned at Corigliano,

* Sacchinelli, pp. 140, 141.

the conversion of which by the priests does not seem to have made great progress, did not dare to trust himself with this rabble on a march through the populous and wealthy Principates. He repaid the compliment of the English in sending him convicts, and furnished the bishops of Policastro and Torrusio with the nucleus of a reactionary army, by sending Panedigrano to co-operate with Trowbridge, and aid the prelates in organizing the insurgent masses in their dioceses. Ruffo appointed these two bishops his plenipotentiaries, and wrote to them that, "to enable them to sustain with *decorum* the authority of the King in that region, he had despatched at the moment a corps of a thousand valorous men, under the command of Niccola Gualtieri, *alias* Panedigrano." *

Having effected this marvellous transformation, the cardinal marched along the Ionian shore to Policoro, where he employed himself for some time in training his ragged and vagabond legions, in collecting supplies of munitions and clothing, and in despatching encyclical letters to encourage

* Sacchinelli, p. 148.

reaction throughout the eastern part of the kingdom.

About the 1st of May he appears to have resumed his march; and on the 7th he closely invested Altamura. This city, as its name imports, is surrounded by high walls. It contained about twenty-four thousand inhabitants, some thousands of republican fugitives from the other towns of that region, and a small republican army. The patriots had resolved upon a vigorous resistance, and hoped for the assistance of the French army. The ingenious account of Sacchinelli will serve to show the state of parties, and the animus with which the siege was conducted on one side and resisted on the other. Here is his account of the mode in which the investment was made :—

"The cardinal, having arrived at Matera, sent a portion of the regular troops, and some companies of sharpshooters, to invest Altamura. On that occasion, the engineers, Vinci and Olivieri, having advanced too far in a reconnoisance of the enemy's position, were unfortunately captured by his cavalry. On the morning of the 7th of May, the cardinal sent to Altamura the officer

Don Raffaelle Vecchioni, with credentials for a parley, and instructions to propose to the generals Mastrangelo and Palomba good terms for the surrender of the place without hostilities, and for the liberation of the two engineers. The envoy was received blindfolded, but did not return."

It was perfectly well understood inside the city that the fate of Cotrone awaited the inhabitants unless they should be able to defend themselves.

"On the evening of the 8th of May, the cardinal ordered that the commandant, De Cesare, and the brigadier, De Sectis, should depart that night with the rest of the regular army, and with a portion of the irregular troops, to make a close investment of Altamura, and that they should take position and await his arrival."

So far the account wears a military look; but the face of things changes immediately.

"All the rest of the irregular troops, and a redundancy of peasantry, who had flocked in from the neighbouring country, seeing the departure of the divisions of De Cesare and De Sectis, and *fearing that Altamura would be sacked without*

profit to themselves, also marched off in the same direction."

We see in this brief paragraph a picture of the whole scene. Peasant populations, brigand bands and the irregular soldiers of the cardinal, all scenting the slaughter, and rushing off in a disordered mass behind the assaulting columns. The soldiers remembered that the sack of Cotrone had been given to a select few, and were determined that no such partiality should be shown at Altamura.

So complete was this stampedo of the sacred legions of the *Christian* army, that "the cardinal and his suite were abandoned at Matera, in the palace of the Duke of St. Candida, with only a guard of two hundred soldiers of the line and a picket of cavalry."

On the night of the 9th, the republican troops and a large portion of the inhabitants abandoned the city, and on the morning of the 10th the rabble of Ruffo entered it. Sacchinelli tells us that the entire population left in the night so secretly that their departure was not suspected until the gates were fired the next morning. This

is his method of relieving the cardinal of the responsibility of that terrible massacre of men, women, and children, including the sick and aged, with which the historians of the time have charged his memory. It is every way improbable that from a closely-invested city not less than thirty thousand people escaped in a single night without the knowledge of the besiegers.

However, even in his subterfuges, our biographer shows us what sort of an army the cardinal was believed to have even by his friends within the city: "Not only the patriots, but all the rest of the population, fled that night."

We learn, too, what the cardinal thought of this army. His genius shines out again with peculiar splendour. It is commonly supposed that bandit chiefs, from the beginning of the world, have maintained order by dividing the stolen goods on some equitable ratio. But one would infer, from the pomp with which the following circumstance is narrated, that Ruffo had invented the system of division of spoils which is in use among highwaymen:—

"The cardinal, considering the sad conse-

quences of the sack of Cotrone, which led to the dispersion of almost his whole army,* had persuaded the chiefs of the regular and irregular troops to agree that when Altamura should be stormed, the pillage of the city should not be permitted, but that instead a heavy war contribution should be levied, and the product of this contribution be divided in just proportions among all the individuals composing the army; but a tragic event dispelled this flattering illusion."

The tragic event alluded to is that Ruffo's troops, entering the city, found that a number of royalists had been butchered by the republicans.

"At the sight of that inhuman and bloody spectacle how was it possible to prevent the sack of Altamura? A general clamour was diffused on the instant throughout the army that they ought to destroy the city, and not to leave one stone upon another. The only measures the cardinal was able to take were to *prevent the desertion of his troops after the sack*, and to prevent an assault in the rear by the fleeing enemy.

* This is what is meant by the sad consequences of the sack.

Pouring out promises and flatteries, he succeeded, with great difficulty, in retaining outside the Porta di Matera a portion of the troops of the line, a part of the companies of riflemen, all the chiefs, priests, and monks; keeping the other gates closed and guarded, he obliged the pillaging parties to lay down their booty before the gate, in order to make a regular division of it.

"That piazza was already full of objects sacked, when another sad accident disturbed the mind of the cardinal, and disgusted everybody. During the pillage, Count Filo was found concealed, and was dragged before the cardinal. At the instant that the count was putting himself in a beseeching attitude at the feet of the cardinal, a shot fired by the barbarous vengeance of G. L., who said he was a relative of the dead engineer Olivieri, prostrated him a corpse at the feet of the cardinal. Touched by this spectacle, and wishing to gratify the cardinal, the general, accompanied by all the chiefs and priests, entered into the city to recall the people and put a stop to the pillage. In order to succeed the sooner, they began the division of the property already

taken and piled up in the open space. Who would be able to describe the contests to which this division gave rise? No one was content with his portion; every one believed himself defrauded, and I can say with truth that *it* was the *genius* of the cardinal which prevented the perpetration of deeds of atrocious memory in that critical emergency."

There is some circumlocution in this account. The reader is conducted through an atrocious incident to a knowledge of the method actually pursued in the pillage of the city; but divested of this verbage, the story, rendered into simple English, stands thus:—Altamura was sacked under the direction of the cardinal, who, to prevent a surprise, and to impede the desertion of his troops, charged himself with an equitable division of the stolen property, and, by the aid of his extraordinary genius, succeeded in keeping peace among his own inflammable and avaricious Calabrians.

Miracles blossom in the path of the cardinal; on occasion, to relieve him from the aspersions of Botta and Colletta, even his enemies work prodi-

gies. To one of these we have alluded. It is that by which thirty thousand or more people march out of Altamura in a single night without the knowledge of the "Christian army." This portion of the history of that terrible 10th of May may be drawn from other sources :—

"When the city was carried by assault, men and women, as many as were able, rushed out at the gate least exposed to fire, and, fighting as they fled, escaped. The fate of those who remained was most terrible, since the conquerors did not know pity. The women, the aged, and the children were put to the sword. A convent of virgins was profaned; all the bad, all the lascivious passions were satiated. Neither at Andria nor Trani, perhaps at Alessia and Saguntum (if the ancient histories are credible), were the ruin and slaughter of Altamura equalled. That inferno endured for three days, and, on the fourth, the cardinal, absolving the sins of his army, blessed it, and proceeded to Gravina, which he put to sack."*

These horrors were succeeded by an almost

* Colletta, b. iv. c. xxiii.

ludicrous change of the relations to each other of the parties to the late contest. The soldiers of Ruffo, like those of Hannibal at Capua, found in the wives and sisters of the vanquished such enticing charms and such agreeable society, that the poor cardinal came near losing his army for the fourth time. At Cotrone his men deserted, loaded down with stolen property; at Corigliano he had been obliged to mount guard over them to prevent their joining the ex-convicts of Messina; at the sack of Altamura he shut all the gates but one, and put his priests and cavalry on guard before that in order to preserve his legions. Now, Altamura had become an enchanted land. The women of the town returned, according to Sacchinelli, in the two or three days after the sack. The result of this return may disclose the object of it. "All the property which had been sacked (except that which the peasants of the neighbouring country had carried away) remained with the women of Altamura, and, therefore, at most, merely changed masters through the pillage. The Calabrians left there even their pay, which up to that time they had saved."

Colletta speaks in the extract above of a "convent of virgins profaned." The only allusion to this event in the Bourbon account is confirmatory of the recorded faith of history. We are told that an officer found a quantity of money in this convent, and that Ruffo was enabled by this "providential circumstance" to provide for the urgent wants of his army. This sum of money amounted to nearly five thousand ducats, and consisted entirely of small silver coins.

Let no one suppose that this appropriation of the money of the convent was a desecration. If Ruffo had been a republican, or were he in the service of Victor Emanuel, such a profane use of sacred money would have thrilled the clerical ranks with horror. But Ruffo, a cardinal and the chief of the Sanfedist* army, is quite another matter. His uplifted hands transformed brigands into Christian troops, pillage into honourable use of the rights of war, and murder into just punishment. However, our biographer does not like to

* "Sanfedist," pertaining to the Holy Faith. I use this adjective because we have none of its exact import, and still more because I do not wish to pollute pure English words by making them descriptive of Cardinal Ruffo's army.

trust the consciences of the faithful on a question of this kind, unless it be absolutely necessary. Therefore :—

"It was not known whether that money was left there by the nuns when they were expelled by the republican patriots, or whether it had been forgotten by these last in the moment of their flight. That which is certain is that on the 9th the monastery was occupied as quarters for the republican troops."

Mark how neatly the whole responsibility of the sack of the convent is transferred to the patriots. Ruffo got the money; but then the republicans had certainly occupied the convent on the 9th. On this slender assertion the whole edifice of his reasoning rests. But it must be remembered that on the 9th the patriots were preparing to leave the city, and actually left that night. It is improbable, therefore, that they found new quarters necessary in the last few hours of their stay. It should further be remembered that from ten to fifteen thousand robbers and assassins broke into the city and spread death and pillage through it on the first

notice that its defenders were gone—that is, on the morning of the 10th. It is beyond question that the five thousand ducats were the cardinal's share, or Ferdinand's share—it is immaterial to which of these brigands it be assigned—of the property stolen in the city of Altamura.

The brigands of the provinces, swelling the train of the cardinal, flowed into Naples. The lava of Vesuvius never inspired that city with as much dread as the approach of that stream of murderers. When this eruption united itself within the city to the brutal lazzaroni, unchained by the fall of all semblance of authority, a chapter of horrors was written which humanity will never have the courage to read.

It is impossible to distinguish the brigand element now confused in a sanguinary civil strife. We know that the brigands are there, but their fierce voices are drowned in the din of the battle.

History has, however, preserved one whose brutality acquired distinction even here. It is the infamous arch-priest RINALDI. Nardini, who, in the beginning of this revolution, was in the

service of Ferdinand, gives us a picture of this beast in cassock:—

"This fool took into his head to ask from the king the command of the city of Capua, and begged me to write his petition; since, though he claimed that he could read the Latin of his breviary—which I very much doubt—he did not know how to write two words consecutively. Among other titles to merit which he wished me to insert in his petition, in order to give him grace with the sovereign, he insisted much upon the fact that he had roasted the arm of a Jacobin under a slow fire, and eaten it with gluttonous relish; that he had dexterously disembowelled two other Jacobins, and had quartered five or six children of patriots."

This is horrible, but it has been surpassed since 1860.

Rinaldi did not obtain the command of Capua, but he put himself at the head of the dregs of Calabrian brigands, whom Ruffo had shaken off, or perhaps, we should rather say, who had deserted Ruffo after the sack of Cotrone, and arrived at Naples in time to

satiate his brutal appetites in that apotheosis of crime.

"The 8th and 9th of July are celebrated for the horrors of every kind which were committed—horrors which my pen refuses to recount. Having lit a great fire before the royal palace, they burned upon it seven unfortunate prisoners, and carried their barbarities to such an extent, that they ate the palpitating limbs of the sufferers. The infamous arch-priest Rinaldi has boasted that he took part in that horrible banquet."*

With such an army, aided by the temporary check of the French arms in Italy, and the owerful alliance which at the moment was obtaining some advantages over the Paris Directory, Ruffo restored Ferdinand to the throne of Naples. It was in perfect keeping with such a campaign that it should terminate with a breach of faith which ought to have excluded the Bourbons from the sympathies and ties of human nature—a breach of faith which stained the honour of the English flag, clouded

* Nardini. See also Cuoco, "Saggio Storico," p. 160.

the fame of Nelson, transformed the butchers Speciale and Guidobaldi into judges, steeped the soil of the places of execution with the best blood of the nation, and consigned all the generous and cultivated spirits who escaped the cord to the lingering tortures of prison and exile.

When Ruffo obtained possession of the city, the patriots and their families took refuge in the forts Castel Nuovo and Castel dell' Ovo. In the last days of June a capitulation was signed by their representatives, by Ruffo, by Foote, the English naval commandant, and by the representatives of the other allies of the Bourbon, of which the following are the most important articles:—

"IV. The persons and property, real or personal, of all the individuals composing the two garrisons shall be respected and guaranteed.

"V. All the said persons may elect either to embark for Toulon or remain in Naples without being molested, neither they nor their families.

"VI. The conditions of the present capitulations are common to persons of both sexes.

"VII. The same conditions shall apply to all

republican prisoners captured by the troops of his Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies, or by his allies, prior to the investment of the forts."

This capitulation saved the honour, and ought to have saved the lives, of the heroic patriots. Few of them had shared in the revolution; the most had accepted the French conquest, and had tried to serve the interests of the nation in coöperating with the Republic. Fighting against disorder in the city and brigandage in the country, they had necessarily fought against Ferdinand, who had wielded these weapons successfully against this ill-starred child of the French Revolution. Independent of the capitulation, there was good ground of defence from a charge of treason for most of the leading spirits of Naples. But Caroline knew neither pity, policy nor faith. Nelson, seduced by the blandishments of the infamous Lady Hamilton, lent himself to the bloody schemes of the Bourbon Court. He prohibited the departure of the vessels laden with those who preferred exile to putting faith in Ferdinand, answering their

anxious inquiries as to when they should be permitted to sail, with, "It belongs to His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies to decide upon the fate of his rebellious subjects." Admiral Caracciolo, every way Nelson's equal except in fortune, and one of the most beautiful characters of his time, was condemned to death by a court-martial held on board the flag-ship of the conqueror of Aboukir. Colletta tells us that a Neapolitan Court, unwilling to condemn to death, without evidence, so much genius and worth, wrote their sentence, "perpetual imprisonment," and that Nelson dictated the change of the sentence by inserting in place of these words, "*death.*"

The re-established Bourbon Government opened its new chapter with a characteristic negotiation. The public hangman of Naples had previously received six ducats for each execution. One would think the price sufficiently reasonable for taking a human life; but a Government, which had by proclamation condemned forty thousand of its best subjects to the scaffold, could ill afford to pay so large a sum for the

butchery. The cup of fortune was dashed from the lips of the executioner, and his pay reduced to an annual salary.

Ruffo's triumph sent to the scaffold Pagano, Cerillo, Conforti, Russo, Manthoné, Scotti, and a host of men less famous, but not less brave or true. It transformed from convicts and brigands into generals, counts, or dukes, Fra Diavolo, Sciarpa, Castelcicala, Panedigrano, and their bloody competitors, for the favour of Ferdinand and Caroline.

CHAPTER III.

BRIGANDAGE DURING THE REIGN OF JOSEPH BONAPARTE.

Effects of the royal vengeance in 1779—Condition of society—Espionage in the city and brigandage in the country—Second flight of Ferdinand—Joseph ascends the throne—Fra Diavolo—Dispositions for his capture—Colonel Hugo sent in pursuit of him—Twenty-nine days' chase—The peasantry bribed, the militia inspired with enthusiasm, spies sent over the provinces—Capture and execution of Fra Diavolo—Failure of military measures to repress brigandage—Joseph adopts milder measures without success—The pardoned brigands in Naples—New and rigorous measures by the provincial authorities—Discovery of crimes perpetrated in 1799—The chiefs Francatrippa and Boja—A case of private vengeance—The chiefs Santoro and Gargaglio—They capture Cotrone—The heads of these brigands brought to the military station—The chief Gueriglia—Incidents of his career—Overflowing prisons and atrocious punishments.

THE events of '99 subverted society at Naples. The authority of the King was restored, but the work had been accomplished by ex-convicts,

bandits, and the lazzaroni, whom a century of misrule and recent events had multiplied into an appalling majority of the nation. Such a condition of things was full of the gravest perils. On the one hand, the brigand and partisan leaders who had restored the throne claimed honours and places which no government can safely assign to those who are fit only for its prisons. Many of these claims were allowed. Orders, decorations and titles which belong only to birth or merit, were degraded by being shared among common assassins. But all could not be honoured on the scale at which they estimated their merits; and many of these faithful servants of despotism had to lament the ingratitude of kings.

On the other hand, the area of assassination had been fearfully enlarged. It had always been safe to kill an enemy or a rival in the distant villages of the provinces, or on the slopes of the Apennines, which have been for two thousand years familiar with safe and profitable crime. Now, murder had become comparatively safe in the cities, and even in the capital of the king-

dom. If the revengeful or avaricious bandit did not choose to stab with his own hand, it was only necessary to lay a charge of republicanism in the hands of Queen Caroline, and the butcher Speciale consigned the hapless wretch to the hangman or the galleys. The number of men living by the corrupt trade in espionage, or by open brigandage, had been immensely increased; the city was so full of the first, and the provinces of the second, that no honest man was safe unless he were poor and unknown.

The check given to the French arms in Italy, and the ambition of Ferdinand, furnished a sensible relief to the situation. The Sanfedist army, which had become a stench in the nostrils of civilization, was poured over the frontier against the falling Roman republic. The advance of this army was led by the partisan Colonel Rodio, now elevated to the rank of general. Under him were Sciarpa, Pronio and Fra Diavolo. The number of this force was perpetually varying —now swollen by accessions of peasant bands and brigands of the various localities, who joined the expedition in the hope of plunder—now les-

sened by the desertion of numbers of these, and of the original force, who were disgusted with the fatigues of the march, or convinced that they were not likely to be regaled with the pillage of the Eternal City. The average number of men under the command of Rodio has been estimated at twelve thousand.

Of what stuff this army was composed is sufficiently evident from the fact, that when it was encamped against Rome, the French general, Garnier, sallied out of the city with an insignificant force, routed it with great slaughter, and drove it back to the frontier.*

The histories of the time make little mention of brigandage from this period to the assumption of the crown of Naples by Joseph Bonaparte. A certain amount of it is the constant rule for all periods. It is only when a political crisis has enlarged the bounds of brigandage, that Neapolitan writers descend to particular accounts of its heroes and their exploits. When a bad

* Garnier, threatened on one side by the English, and on the other by the Russians, afterwards capitulated to a new and more regular Neapolitan army, under the command of General Burchard.

harvest, or some struggle of civilization with feudalism, has enlarged the field of highway robbery, we find a line or a paragraph, but no full account of the events and their immediate causes. Such a paragraph informs us, that in the year 1804, the disbanded Sanfedist army was ravaging the provinces in its proper brigand dress. I quote from Colletta:—

"In the meantime, numerous bands of assassins, who had been warriors of the *Santa Fede*, and had returned poor and demoralized, scoured the provinces under arms; and, united with two hundred or more fugitives from the prisons of Aquila, pillaged as public robbers the houses of the country and the defenceless villages. Heavy columns of soldiers pursued them."*

Let us pass to the second French occupation of the kingdom of Naples. Napoleon had now become Emperor of France, and, though he had never been ambitious of the dominion of Naples, he was forced by military considerations to take

* Book v., c. xxiv. The pursuit was vain. The last line reads like a passage from the history of the last three years. It would be true of almost any year, month, or day since the last expulsion of the Bourbons.

possession of it. He was on the eve of a campaign in Germany, and it was of the utmost importance to prevent an advance upon his army in Upper Italy. If Ferdinand had known the first duties of a sovereign, he would have remained neutral in the war between the Emperor and the League. He could add nothing to the strength of the cause of those with whom he sympathized, and should have learned from '99 that he could offer no effectual resistance to a French army.

But Ferdinand and his court had as little political sagacity as capacity for government.

Not content with promoting the alliance against France, he sought to play upon the Emperor that low cunning which he habitually employed to degrade and ruin the morals of his own people. He resorted to duplicity, falsehood and treachery. He signed treaties of alliance with the enemies of Napoleon, while professing to him a constant purpose of neutrality.

Napoleon soon penetrated this foolish attempt at cunning, and, on the 27th of December, 1805, declared Ferdinand fallen, by repeated perjuries

and treacheries, from the throne of the Two Sicilies. He disposed of the crown in these two sentences of a letter to his brother Joseph, dated the 31st of March, 1806 :—

"I think best to finish the affair of Naples. Be King of the Two Sicilies."

Joseph was already within the kingdom. Ferdinand had lost all hold on the affections of his subjects, and, at the first rumour of French arms, king and court again fled to Sicily. Safe under the protection of their powerful allies, the Bourbons renewed the war of brigands by which they had overthrown the Parthenopean Republic.

These few words will recall to the mind of the reader the political situation, and prepare him to follow intelligently the development of brigandage throughout the Neapolitan provinces. It is scarcely necessary to add that I am not writing the history of governments in South Italy. The evil described in this book is precisely the opposite of government, but fortunately the records of the race have furnished no occasion for any word descriptive of it, except brigandage and its synonyms.

During the two years of Joseph's reign at Naples, the public order and tranquillity were constantly disturbed by a war, which, with the exceptions of the operations of the English fleet, and the sieges of Gaeta and other fortresses, never rose to the dignity of partisan warfare. The provinces were ravaged from a double base of operations; the eternal one of the mountains and woods, on the one side; the shore line from Gaeta to Tarantum covered by the English fleets, on the other. The scum of the Sicilian population was transported to the mainland, and protected in this minute war by the allies of Ferdinand.

Fra Diavolo is the most conspicuous among the brigand chiefs of this period. In the autumn of 1806, while the French troops, under Joseph, were marching on the capital, and Ferdinand was yet reigning at Naples, this great devil, with a band of two hundred brigands, was robbing, burning and killing among the subjects of his master on the Garigliano. When Ferdinand fled to Sicily, Fra Diavolo followed him; collecting in Sicily a band of about three hundred men, con-

sisting of ex-convicts and old soldiers of the army of Ruffo, he landed upon the shores of Gaeta. He was joined by the companions of his boyhood in considerable numbers, and at one time probably had fifteen hundred cut-throats under his orders. This force roved over the country between the Volturno and the States of the Church. They were divided into small parties, who burned, pillaged, and prostrated the French authority, and created in the public mind a reaction in favour of the Bourbons.

Fra Diavolo now bore the titles of brigadier-general of the Neapolitan army and Duke of Cassano. Joseph having resolved to destroy him and his marauding bands, made military dispositions for the purpose on a large scale. Three generals were charged with guarding the lines between the States of the Church, the Garigliano, the Volturno, and the sea.

General Goulu, with a brigade, kept his eye on the valley of the Sora; General Dusheme, with a division, held the Roman States; and General Valentini, commanding in the province of Gaeta, was charged to prevent the escape of the bandits by sea.

These arrangements drew a cordon round the country in which Fra Diavolo was turning everything upside down. Then Colonel Hugo, father of the illustrious Victor, was sent with a force of about nine hundred men to hunt down the quarry.*

Fra Diavolo knew of these dispositions before they were completed, and, without waiting for the attack of Hugo, he marched rapidly towards the mountains, surprised the national guard of San Guglielmo, routed a battalion of militia encamped at Circe, and gained Cervaro an hour in advance of the French troops. This rapid movement put him outside of the encircling lines, and left his enemies behind him.

Hugo divided his force into two columns and plunged on through a country excessively broken, destitute of roads, and almost of inhabitants. The brigand, surprised at the audacity and celerity of the French colonel, and finding himself in danger of being encircled, dashed straight into the solitudes of the mountains. It was peril of

* This account of the chase and capture of Fra Diavolo is taken from the Memoirs of Colonel Hugo.

starvation for Fra Diavolo, but none the less so for Hugo if he attempted to pursue at the top of his speed. The brigand, more accustomed to fasting, conquered at this game. Hugo was obliged to return to Cervaro for provisions; but he had no thought of relinquishing the pursuit. He re-entered Cervaro at ten P.M., rested barely five hours, and at three in the morning was again in motion.

At the pass of Aquafondata, Fra Diavolo left a portion of his force to dispute it with the French. Hugo came up to the pass before night, and carried it by storm; but a tempest of rain set in, and the wearied French were obliged to halt until dawn of the next day. They were in motion with the earliest light, and dashed into the mountains.

There were no roads; but Fra Diavolo knew every mule-path and foot-path in that part of the Appennines. He began a series of marches and countermarches, up and down, hither and yon, doubling and redoubling upon the French line of advance. Hugo was close upon the enemy, but he had no human prospect of catching him. The scattered peasantry, overcome by French gold—of which

Hugo probably paid them more than had been in the hands of these people for ten generations, furnished the desired information. The indefatigable colonel availed himself of it at once. With his peasant guides he took the short, rough, and perilous passages from valley to valley, marching in the beds of torrents, climbing up and around cascades bristling with sharp rocks, and through awful defiles, always with the utmost celerity. The soldiers, cutting their shoes to pieces over the jagged edges of the rocks, were obliged to take them off, and pursue with naked feet.

The chase had become exciting, and the whole command felt the enthusiasm of their daring leader. This hot pursuit lasted for eight days. The soldiers hardly slept, and ate as they ran.

Hugo continued to ply his gold. Besides, his spies, sent to him by the minister of police at Naples, were all over the province. If Naples had learnt anything since 1799 it was espionage. Caroline had declared that she would pay so well for it as to render it honourable. She did not succeed in that, for it is not in the power of sovereigns to abrogate the moral instincts of humanity. But she did make

perfect political spies. Joseph found them ready to his hand, and, more sensible every way than the ecstatic visionaries of the republic, he used such elements of government as the country afforded. The prefects and syndics of all the northern part of the kingdom were enlisted in the hunt, and perhaps fifty thousand militia were charged with watching the various passes on both sides of the mountains. The thousand Franco-Neapolitans were close at the heels of Fra Diavolo, but could not yet lay hands on him.

A new element was unexpectedly introduced into the contest. Hugo had pushed the brigand chief some distance to the southward. A French column marching towards the Abruzzi, charged with a totally different expedition, fell upon the track of the bandit. Fra Diavolo, in his anxiety to avoid the tenacious Hugo, was not on his guard for this new force, and being attacked by it was routed with great slaughter.

Hugo was so near that he heard the musketry of his compatriots and fell like lightning on the brigand's rear.

The cunning of Fra Diavolo was equal to the

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emergency. Almost totally surrounded and despairing of the result of a new battle, he collected his men and ordered them to divide into small companies. He commanded one man in each of these to represent himself as the chief, each company to take different routes, but all to seek to reach the coast and embark for Sicily.

The band melted away like smoke, and Hugo, rushing upon the supposed prey, found only the evidences of this singular flight.

Fra Diavolo had introduced a most troublesome element into the game. He had multiplied himself indefinitely. There were at least a score of false Fra Diavolos, and rumour added a hundred more. Within a circuit of ten miles there was not a valley or a peasant hut where Fra Diavolo was not reputed to be.

Hugo penetrated the stratagem and provided for rendering it futile. His plan was to extend his lines and drive all these little companies in one direction. This was comparatively easy, as the squads of Fra Diavolo had really a common destination, and the French troops and militia were everywhere alert. By this plan, Fra Dia-

volo was forced to take the route which best suited Hugo. At the same time, the brigand companies were driven like hunted wolves towards a common centre.

Fra Diavolo would have been in little danger under ordinary circumstances; but for once in the history of brigandage every man's hand was against the brigand. The peasants, generally the allies of these bands, betrayed him. The militia, always lukewarm or friendly to the wrong side, were inspired with some enthusiasm for the right. All this was new to Fra Diavolo, and put his genius at fault.

One column of Hugo's troops was moving down on the left bank of the Biferno; the colonel himself shot straight through the Molise, by passes whose natural wildness had lately been increased by a terrible earthquake, and rushed upon the brigands, now forced together, at the bridge of Vinchiatura. The militia of this place failed to guard the bridge, and Fra Diavolo had the road open behind him. Hugo dashed down upon the band with his advance, which was greatly inferior to Fra Diavolo's force, and

charged at the head of his troops with French gallantry. After the first volley, the fight was not a noisy one. The rain had been pouring down in torrents for days, and there was scarcely an ounce of dry powder on either side. Finding that their powder would not burn, the Franco-Neapolitan soldiers went into close quarters with bayonets, knives, and the butts of their muskets. The contest was sharp and bloody. The rest of the Franco-Neapolitan troops came up, and, at the end of two hours, the brigands were routed with great slaughter.

The Biferno, usually at this point easily fordable, was swollen to an impassable torrent. If the bridge had been guarded by the national guard of Vinchiatura, Fra Diavolo must have been driven into the river or captured. But the carelessness or treachery of this body of militia allowed the brigand to escape with one hundred and fifty of his men. But he left thrice that number dead, wounded, and prisoners on the field.

Hugo was pressing close at his heels. The weather resembled a second flood, and five or six

men were struck by lightning on the march to Benevento. Passing through Benevento the column arrived at the banks of the Calore. Fra Diavolo had forded it a few hours before, but the stream had suddenly swollen to fifteen or sixteen feet. Here was a new difficulty. Fra Diavolo was likely to gain twenty-four hours, time enough to take him to the shore opposite Capri, of which the English Colonel Hudson Lowe, afterwards the jail-keeper of Napoleon at St. Helena, still had possession. Hugo was not discouraged. He had obtained supplies, and was able to provide his men with new shoes. The men were exhausted, and murmured, but the Colonel succeeded in rousing them for a new effort. At one the next morning they were again on the march.

Hugo, who had divined the intention of Fra Diavolo, marched straight to Montesarchio, which is located on the site of the Caudine Forks. Here he astonished both his troops and the peasantry, by announcing his intention to go directly across the mountain towards Naples. Fra Diavolo was moving along the other side, thinking himself at last out of danger. A few peasant guides were

obtained, and the French troops marched up a mountain never before scaled by an army—scarcely travelled by civilized man—in the darkness of a moonless night. They stumbled along over stones and fallen bushes, depending entirely on their guides for the direction and their situation. Towards dawn the wearied soldiers were told that they were at the summit. The sun rose and the magnificent Bay of Naples lay before them.

They set out towards Aletta. Fra Diavolo, marching quietly along the northern declivities of the mountain, was suddenly surprised by a spirited fire of musketry. It seemed to him to come from the clouds. The action was short, and most of the brigands were killed or captured, but the slippery chief got off with thirty of his men.

Hugo pushed on after him along the declivities which were so thickly covered with shrubs and trees that no orderly march was possible, and everything depended on the fidelity of the guides.

Fra Diavolo had this time better hope of escape than ever. His adversary did not know

the direction, and he himself was familiar with every tree. He dashed away towards the road to Apulia, expecting by this manœuvre to elude the foe behind him, but he had scarcely struck the highway when he fell in with a fresh regiment of French cavalry marching from Naples to aid in the chase.

This time escape seemed absolutely impossible. On one side of the road was a precipice which no man could scale; on the other, Hugo was advancing towards the road. Flight towards Apulia would throw him into the toils of his unwearied hunter. His inventive genius supplied a remedy for this net of difficulties.

He turned to his men and said,—

"Tie my hands behind my back. Do the same to my lieutenant."

The men were astonished, but obeyed in silence, using handkerchiefs in the absence of cords.

"Now," said Fra Diavolo, "let us move down the road and meet this cavalry. They will ask you who we are. You will answer, 'These are two brigands of the band of Fra Diavolo

whom we have taken and are conducting to Naples in order to obtain the premium."

"But suppose they should wish to take you themselves?"

"Then you will retire, protesting against the injustice which they do you. You, at least will be safe."

The stratagem was excellent. Fra Diavolo's men figured as militia of the district. The premium offered for brigands at Naples was a capital pretext for asking permission to pass on their way, and so gain the rear of the cavalry. The artifice succeeded.

Whoever has heard a Neapolitan improvisatore can imagine the affected sadness of Fra Diavolo and his lieutenant, the serious and solemn vivacity of the spokesmen for the false mititia. A story of the capture was invented, on the instant, so probable and so perfectly consistent in all its details, that one must have been dead to the voice of truth and innocence to distrust it. Fra Diavolo gained the rear of the cavalry. His false enemies bade good bye to their new friends, and moved off three hundred paces. Here the two leaders

slipped off their handkerchiefs, and shot into the woods; the pretended militia fired their muskets into the air, and all went off pell-mell into the depths of the forest.

The cavalry saw the affair, but they did not know the importance of the escaped prisoners; were unacquainted with the roads, and naturally left the pretended militiamen to make the pursuit. In half an hour Hugo, weary, well nigh exhausted, but full of enthusiasm, encountered the cavalry. The story of the two brigands was not half told before he comprehended the deception, and pushed on after the fugitives, divining that Fra Diavolo had regained the by-road to the coast from which the movement over the mountains had driven him.

During the next night at Lettere, in the neighbourhood of Castellamare, Hugo came up with the band, attacked and killed the greater part of the brigands. Fra Diavolo was himself wounded, but escaped again with a few companions. The next day the chief fell in with a company of militia, and was again wounded. He reached Cava, dismissed his few companions, and

endeavoured to reach the shore alone. Once there, he could steal a boat, and push off towards Capri.

Hugo lost all trace of him; and, after a pursuit of twenty-nine days, in which the utmost skill, tenacity and enthusiasm of a French officer had been combined with the highest degree of effectiveness in the local authorities and militia, in which full and accurate information had been constantly obtained from the peasants, the brigand had escaped from the very hands of his untiring pursuer.

Doubtless Fra Diavolo would have got off to Capri, and in a month would have been at the head of a more formidable band, but for a circumstance not yet mentioned. Joseph had put a reward of six thousand ducats on the head of the daring chief.

That night, exhausted by long fasting and two wounds, Fra Diavolo took refuge in the hut of a peasant. Before putting aside his arms, he ascertained from the peasant that there was no militia in the immediate vicinity. Then he ate the slender remains of the peasant's supper, and

lay down to sleep. A new accident intervened, and nearly cost him his life. Four brigands, not of his company, entered the hut in the night, disarmed and robbed him, and, to prevent his giving information, ordered him to follow them. They were brigands, but he did not dare to disclose his name. The six thousand ducats put upon his head forbade the disclosure.

Faint and worn with marching and fasting, he dropped down in the path and was left to die. After some time, he rallied, and staggered along at random. He had lost his way, since the particular district was new to him. During the night he found himself at the entrance of the village of Baronisi. Here he was arrested as a supposed brigand, but without suspicion on the part of the police of his true character. The carabineers conducted him to Salerno. While undergoing examination at the police-station, one of Hugo's Neapolitans entered the room, and exclaimed—

"Fra Diavolo!"

The brigand chief tried to deny his identity, but the soldier had seen him too often in the

streets of Naples, wearing the uniform with which royal gratitude had clothed him, to be mistaken. Hugo came up, and proofs multiplied. The next day this officer informed Joseph that he had captured Fra Diavolo; but in that spirited chase he had acquired respect for the daring leader, and recommended him to the clemency of his sovereign.

The recommendation was in vain. Fra Diavolo was hung, wearing his uniform of a brigadier-general of Ferdinand, embroidered with the arms of the Duke of Cassano.

The Government reasoned thus:—"We could pardon the general, we might even treat him as a prisoner of war, but we cannot pardon the robber and assassin because he wears the uniform of a general." He was tried, condemned and executed for the common crimes which he had committed.

I have detailed this chase of Fra Diavolo, because it illustrates the difficulties under which all efforts to destroy brigandage are conducted, and shows conclusively that mere military measures are inadequate to destroy it. Without the

aid of spies, of the peasantry, of a reward of six thousand ducats, of the local militia, Hugo must have lost all trace of Fra Diavolo in the Molise. His arrest at the last was due rather to fortuitous circumstances than to the military force which he had finally eluded.

The military measures of Joseph failed to repress brigandage. He resolved to follow in the footsteps of all his predecessors on the Neapolitan throne, and make trial of milder means. He was in some sort reduced to this as a necessity. The brigands, defeated in their contests with the troops, had resorted to their peculiar tactics. They ran when attacked, but fell on the rear of the pursuing or retreating columns.

Finding even this dangerous, they contented themselves with holding the highways, scouring the country, sacking the villages known to be friendly to the French, and with perpetrating the common crimes of robbery, arson and assassination. Joseph issued a decree in which he promised pardon to all brigands who should present themselves unarmed to the royal authorities, and swear fidelity to the king, and obedience to the

laws. Great numbers laid aside their arms, not because they were sincerely converted to Joseph, but that they might enjoy in quiet, under the protection of the laws, their ill-gotten gains, or in the hope of finding better opportunities for plunder in the next revolution of power.

These abominable men came to Naples laden with a wealth acquired by robbery. They flaunted in finery before the faces of those whom they had robbed, some of these being yet clothed in black for the memory of friends whom these wretches had murdered. They made sumptuous banquets, rolled down the Toledo in gilded coaches and squandered their wealth upon gaming tables, while honest people, whom they had pillaged, lived on the verge of beggary. The gains of these miscreants were soon spent; and inclination, habit and necessity, combined with opportunity, led them back to their old life.

The ministers of the government in the provinces soon found their own throats in peril from the very men whom they had pardoned in the name of the king. They passed from disgraceful mildness to equally disgraceful atrocity. The

new brigands who presented themselves for pardon, "were received and slaughtered sometimes with a pretence of justice, oftener without such disguise." Colletta says, "I saw one day in the valley of Morano many corpses, and learned that a number of the *amnestéd* (so were they styled in French) had been slain by the guards. It was pretended that they had broken their chains, and attempted to flee; then the guards began the slaughter, killing one here and another there, some singly, others in groups, now with the sword, now with musketry, imitating in the massacre the accidents of regular war. The place looked like a field of battle."*

These atrocities were not ordered by the government, perhaps not even by the provincial authorities. It is probable that they were the bloody banquets of private vengeance, combined with political animosity and indignation at the mildness of Joseph.

The principle of the edict was bad, some of the practice under it was worse. Joseph pursued, captured, and hung Fra Diavolo; but with

* "Storia," b. vi. c. xxx.

another bandit who had become the terror and scourge of the Abruzzi, he pursued a very different policy. The name of this marauder was Antonelli. Joseph sent plenipotentiaries to treat with him as between government and government. The envoys were General Merlin and the Baron Nalli. Antonelli made difficult terms, demanding nothing less than the rank of colonel; but the envoys were glad to concede even this. Antonelli received a splendid uniform, and the peace was proclaimed by his triumphal entry into Chieti, mounted upon a splendid horse, and glittering in gold lace, gilt buttons and the epaulettes of a Capo-Legione.

These honours, so far from curing the bloody propensities of Antonelli, only encouraged his natural audacity. Under Murat, he took to his old work. It was left for General Manhès to humble the pride of the robber, by assigning him a very different entry into Lanciano.

Near the end of the year 1806, eleven brigands, five of whom were brothers (the entire family is almost always comprehended in the rolls of brigandage), were arrested at Policastro. There

were found in their possession letters written by some French soldiers, who had been shipwrecked on the coast of Calabria in 1799. The discovery of the letters led to the first knowledge of one of the crimes of that unhappy period. These shipwrecked soldiers had been murdered by these bandits, and the latter had preserved for six years the evidence of their infamy, as letters-patent for honours under Ferdinand. In fact, the trial of these wretches developed proofs that they had already received honourable mention for their fidelity to Ferdinand. They were condemned and executed.

In January, 1807, three brothers named Abatemarco, and a fourth bandit, were tried for assassination of French soldiers, wrecked on the coast of Calabria. When arrested, these men were living in Montesano, well known as brigands, but unmolested by their neighbours or the local authorities. Their disorders had attracted the attention of the military commandant of the province, and a general was sent to provide for the public security.

The assassins were arrested in their own

house, and in searching in it some passports, issued to French soldiers at Alexandria, in 1799, were discovered. This discovery led to an investigation into the antecedents of the brothers Abatemarco. It was found that these men, having, after the restoration of Ferdinand, assassinated the president of the tribunal of Salerno, were pardoned by the brigand king, *because* they were able to prove that, in 1799, they had assassinated some French soldiers wrecked on the coast. Thus the earlier crime, taking a political complexion, absolved them from the later one. The method in which this pardon was brought about, shows at once the spirit of the Bourbon government and the cunning of the brigands. After having committed the crime, they enclosed a quantity of objects taken from the murdered men in a small box, and sent it by a sure hand to the infamous Castelcicala, as a humble proof of their devotion to their legitimate sovereign. This Bourbon spy, butcher, minister and ambassador acknowledged the gracious gift, and assured the assassins that the king would remember their "zeal, attachment and good con-

duct." When condemned for the murder of a judge, it was only necessary to recall to the remembrance of their sovereign this act of fidelity and his royal promise. It is hardly necessary to say that the brothers Abatemarco were executed in 1807, for the assassination of '99.

Joseph wrote to his brother on the 2nd of February, 1807, as follows:—

"The assassins of the French who came from Egypt in the year '8 have been solemnly tried at Naples. During the trial there was an immense concourse of people. The four were executed yesterday. One of them was a priest. Their crimes have been proved with the utmost clearness."

Queen Caroline had offered a reward of 50,000 ducats to whomsoever should assassinate Joseph. A brigand named Mosca was arrested in June, 1807, who described himself as "formerly a *miller*, now a *colonel* in the service of Queen Caroline." He was alone, armed with a gun, and clothed in the uniform of a Bourbon militiaman. His singular claim to a title not quite consistent with his uniform and his suite, which

did not even number a dog, led to a pretty thorough examination of his person. The police found two letters written by the Queen and a bracelet of her hair. The letters revealed his mission, and the bracelet proved the affection of her majesty. At this point, Mosca confessed that he had come for the purpose of assassinating the King, and that he had been accompanied from Sicily by two others bearing the title of captains. (They had expected to find plenty of soldiers on the mainland). When the French arrested Mosca, the valorous captains had already deserted him. Mosca gave as a reason for their desertion, that, "having committed some homicides, and finding that there were many soldiers in the neighbourhood, they had fled to avoid being arrested." Mosca was executed with the bracelet and letter of Queen Caroline suspended to his neck.

Joseph wrote his brother on the 20th of June, as follows:—

"We are giving chase to brigands in every direction. We are in the midst of trials and arrests of the agents of Queen Caroline. This

woman is truly a prodigy of wickedness, of activity and of impudence. She lavishes upon assassins her letters and even bracelets of her hair."

On the 14th of July, having spoken of the execrable conduct of the Bourbons, and the disgust of the Neapolitans thereat, he says:—

"One can do nothing for people who would be condemned to the gallows if they were private persons."

One of the horrors of this period is the brigand Francatrippa. The base of his operations was the village of Parenti, in the Calabrian mountains, which was a nest of assassins. One half of the population robbed on the highway, and the other half furnished them with hiding places and shared the booty. The custom is preserved to this day in other South Italian villages. In September, 1807, Francatrippa destroyed an entire company of French soldiers, by an artifice very common with the brigands. These troops on the march to Cosenza had lost their way, and presented themselves at the gates of Parenti near nightfall. Francatrippa went out

to meet them, representing himself as the commandant of the national guard, and inviting them to the hospitality of the commune.

The French officers, though they had been repeatedly warned to distrust the friendly receptions of the rural districts, received the invitations in good faith, and fell into the snare. The troops entered the town, distributed themselves among the people, laid aside their arms, and betook themselves to eating and drinking with the avidity of soldiers wearied by a fatiguing march. At a preconcerted signal the brigands fell upon them and massacred all but seven in a company of eighty men.

When these seven fugitives, fleeing to Cosenza, reported the disaster, a strong body of troops was sent to put the inhabitants of Parenti to the sword. The village was deserted, and the officer in command had to content himself with burning the town. Some weeks afterwards it was reported that Francatrippa was in the neighbourhood of the ruins of Parenti. A company of one hundred and twenty men was sent to sieze the passes and surprise him. The expedi-

tion failed, as usually happens, but the escape of Francatrippa was ascribed to the connivance of some peasants, who fired signals for the brigands. Francatrippa continued to elude the grasp of the French, and near the end of 1807 fled to Palermo upon an English vessel.

Boja, a brigand leader of this period, seems to have rivalled the barbarities of Mammone. He subjected the French who fell into his hands to every species of torture. In one of the numerous encounters which he had with the soldiers of Joseph, he was wounded and taken prisoner. He was condemned to death at Cosenza, but the inhabitants of that place objected to the sentence, and clamorously demanded that he should first be subjected to the same torments which he had inflicted on his victims. This consisted in cutting off the eyebrows, ears, nose and lips, and then removing him to prison until warm weather. When it became warm he would be smeared with honey and exposed, to be devoured by insects. The French officers refused to modify their sentence in this sense, saying they were not butchers but soldiers; but some young men of

Cosenza offered to perform the operation with their own hands. However, Boja and his companions were simply hung.

I have spoken of the intensity of private enmity in these provinces. It belongs to all periods alike, and renders the administration of justice exceedingly difficult and dangerous. In troubled times, under summary tribunals, it confounds the innocent with the guilty.

An incident in the reign of Joseph forcibly illustrates these military trials.

A detachment of soldiers, lodged in a village near Cosenza, was supplied with bread by the commune. The commandant of the national guard arrested the baker who furnished bread for the French troops, on a charge that he had poisoned a quantity to be delivered on the following day. The charge was signed by three witnesses, and several pounds of poisoned dough was produced as the *corpus delicti*. Fortunately, the judge of the military commission happened to conceive some doubts regarding the genuineness of the evidence, and subjected one of the witnesses to a strict examination, in which he judi-

ciously mingled severe threats of punishment if the man did not confess the conspiracy.

The witness confessed; the matter was probed to the bottom, and it was found that the captain of the national guard, having failed in an attempted seduction of the baker's daughter, had taken this method of obtaining revenge.

BENINCASA was a simple brigand under Ferdinand. In 1805 he took to the woods to avoid arrest for homicides, thefts, and house-burnings. In 1806 he became an ally of priests, a faithful servant and colonel of Ferdinand and Caroline. He gave the French troops infinite trouble, especially in 1807, but his ambition never led him to attempt a partisan war. The sun seldom rose without disclosing some crime perpetrated by him under the cover of the darkness, but he eluded the vigilance of the emissaries and soldiers of Joseph. His soldiers were principally ex-convicts thrown upon the coasts by the English; and as Cardinal Ruffo was not at hand to transform them into "valorous men," they remained simple footpads and cut-throats.

SANTORO AND GARGAGLIO seem to have been two of these ex-convicts.

As early as the 20th of May, 1807, these leaders at the head of a small body of brigands assaulted Cotrone, whose misfortunes in 1799 I have already related. They summoned it to surrender, and meeting with a refusal, fired upon the walls for some time with a small cannon which they had received from the English. This cannonade furnished amusement for the inhabitants, but did not in the least endanger the security of the place, and the brigands withdrew.

On the 27th of May the place was nearly denuded of troops by an order which called them to Cosenza. It had been intended to supply a garrison from another regiment, but by an unfortunate misunderstanding these soldiers went to Catanzaro. Santoro and Gargaglio, who were on the watch, seized the occasion to make an assault upon the few coast-guards and artillerymen who held the fortifications. In this attack they were aided by the plebeian part of the inhabitants, who at a preconcerted signal broke into insurgence, hoisted the Bourbon flag, and frightened the

national guard from the defences. Then they opened the gates to the brigands, and united with them in a general pillage.

The occasion was seized to organize anew the Bourbon government of the city, and preparations were made to hold out against the French troops. On the 3rd of June the force sent by General Regnier invested the place, and on the 4th drove the Bourbonists within the walls. The brigands made a sortie on the 5th, but were driven back with serious loss. The same evening two English sloops approached, and furnished the besieged much moral, and some material support, especially some cannon which were landed and mounted on the walls.

The brigands being thus reinforced, the French found it necessary to commence a regular siege, and General Regnier repaired in person to the spot. The siege lasted until the 11th of July, when the brigands took refuge upon the English barks, and the French re-established their authority.

It seems scarcely credible, but it is nevertheless true, that all this bloodshed and annoyance

given to the French troops were due to the impudent daring of two brigand chiefs with an insignificant following of reckless adventurers.

An incident of the escape of the besieged preserved by Colletta, illustrates the intrepidity of these Calabrians. When they found that further resistance was hopeless, having no other means of giving information of their desperate position to the English vessels, three of their number undertook to swim out to them. The swimmers were discovered, and fired upon by the French. Two were killed, but the third, more fortunate, succeeded in reaching the nearest vessel, and measures were concerted by which his companions were taken off the following night.

We miss the names of Santoro and Gargaglio in the records of these disorders in Calabria until the next year.

In November, 1807, a considerable body of men, under their command, gave so much encouragement to the reactionary party in the region of Longobucco, that they refused to pay taxes, and killed the escort of the French collector. Meetings were held, and the return of

the true King was believed by the deluded Bourbonists to be near at hand. In fine, Longobucco was insurgent.

A body of French troops, 560 strong, was ordered to march rapidly from Rossano upon Longobucco, with the design of surprising the town. The distance was fourteen miles, the roads were horrible, rather there were none on the route selected for the expedition, but still it seemed easy to surprise the town by a sudden march. Guides exorbitantly paid were procured, and the troops set out. The Italian officers on the Papal frontier complain that French troops cannot march without an amount of noise that gives notice of their line of march for miles around. The fault does not seem to be new; for on this occasion the blare of their trumpets in the solitudes of glens never before trod by an army, aroused the villages near Longobucco, and the troops found the hills covered with armed peasants: The peasants were easily dispersed, but the alarm had been given, and Longobucco was deserted by its insurgent and brigand warriors. At the gates, the French officer in command was

met by the village priest, and a melancholy procession of old men who begged for mercy.

The French officer exhorted the priest and the old men to use their authority to induce the fugitives to return, threatening to pillage the town if they did not obey. By this means he actually succeeded in repopulating the town, and restoring order in that immediate locality. But Santoro and Gargaglio refused to return. The commandant wrote to them promising them pardon for their share in the insurrection of Longobucco. They still refused, not so much, the chroniclers say, because they doubted French faith, as because they feared punishment for former crimes.

The French commandant resolved to attack them in a village into which they had fled with a considerable number of followers. He had learned something in his noisy assault upon Longobucco, and set out in a direction opposite to that which he designed to pursue. After nightfall he changed his course, marched stealthily upon, and encircled, the village. At dawn he summoned it to surrender. The summons

was replied to by a discharge of musketry which killed some of the soldiers.

Then the village was stormed, carried by assault, and the brigands and the male inhabitants were put to the sword. The curate and some women and children took refuge in a church, before the door of which the French officers fought with their own infuriated soldiers, who were raging to complete the destruction of the inhabitants. Two hundred brigands were killed; but the wary and cautious chiefs made their escape in the direction of Bocchigliero, pursued by the column. The inhabitants of this place had taken an active part in the recent reactionary movement; but, terrified by the approach of the French troops, they went out in mass, unarmed, to implore pardon. Of course they pretended that they could give no information about the fugitive chiefs.

The commandant threatened to despatch twenty of the principal citizens to Cosenza as hostages for the good behaviour of the town, unless all the arms in the commune should be surrendered immediately. In an hour he had

broken up and burned three thousand muskets. Tranquillity seemed to be restored by these movements; but the French officers knew that so long as the brigand chiefs were at large, the pacification of the country was only apparent.

The district was occupied by a considerable military force, which seized all the principal positions, and made vigorous search after the fugitives; but all efforts proved fruitless. An entire month was occupied in mounting guard over an insignificant mountain region, which was orderly and peaceful—dangerous only because it concealed within it two leaders of insurrection.

The commandant, anxious to leave a region which in December is one of the most unpleasant on the peninsula, issued more stringent orders and more threatening proclamations to the people of the district. The inhabitants, wishing at all hazards to be rid of the French troops who were eating up their substance, and convinced that the soldiers would not leave until the brigands were arrested or killed, set about the chase themselves. What the troops had not been able to accomplish in a month of good weather, the people

accomplished in four days of the most unfavourable weather, when the mountains were deeply covered with snows and the valleys ploughed by torrents of rain. On the 6th of December some men presented themselves at the military quarters, bearing in a basket two human heads recently cut off, claiming that they were those of Santoro and Gargaglio. An investigation satisfied the commandant that the heads had really belonged to the daring chiefs, and put an end to the tragedy.

GUERIGLIA was another noted brigand who ravaged in the Basilicata. The details of his exploits have a painful resemblance to those of his more famous associates. He was finally captured and executed. On his person were found instructions to excite revolt, and to indicate to his companions the houses to be burned and the rebels to be killed. These instructions were signed by the English officer, Sidney Smith.*

The efforts of the Bourbons were crowned with a melancholy success. They did not subdue

*. Colletta, b. vi. c. xx.

the French arms, but they provoked those who bore them to severity, and utterly unsettled the security of the population.

The kingdom was a seething cauldron of disorder. The spies and secret agents of both governments rivalled each other in activity, in duplicity, and in provoking barbarities. The prisons of Joseph were full of the guilty and of the innocent. His military tribunals were not able to dispose of all the cases which required judgment. No census of those condemned and executed would be possible, much less of the number of the assassinated.

All this disorder had its roots in brigandage. In any other country, the French conquest would have been accepted by the inhabitants, and the decision of the claims of the rival sovereigns left to the arbitration of battles or of congresses. Here a war not simply of guerillas and partisans, but of bandits and assassins, was carried on by the royalists with incredible brutality, and punished on the other hand with fruitless rigour.

A French colonel, who had travelled or fought

in Egypt, impaled one of his brigand prisoners with Ottoman atrocities. Another bandit was suspended to a wall, and stoned to death by an infuriated populace.*

The number of prisoners was so great, that they frequently burst open their temporary prisons, and took to the country, animated by vengeance and desperation. To obviate these difficulties, the police, under pretence of transferring the incarcerated from one prison to another, caused some of them to be shot by the way.† Others were conducted into the prisons of France. It is impossible to defend the conduct of either party. It was a rivalry for infamy between the agents of Joseph and Ferdinand.

If we could predicate patriotism of the votaries of the Bourbons, we should find some excuse for a partisan warfare against a foreign domination. But when we remember how little claim that stupid tyranny had to the affection of its subjects, how little esteem it possessed in the intelligent classes, how sanguinary had been its vengeance in 1799, and how recklessly it stimu-

* Colletta, vol. ii. c. xv. † Ibid.

lated a disorder which could only provoke French vengeance and subvert the security of the population for generations, we are tempted to put aside the record with a blush for humanity, and a wish that history had dropped a veil over these years pregnant with infamy. But the fruits of that seed-time are being harvested by the Italians in 1864; the lessons then learned by the Bourbons have not been forgotten, and, under the shelter of French arms, they repeat with aggravations the barbarities of that period.

CHAPTER IV.

BRIGANDAGE DURING MURAT'S REIGN.

The political situation in 1808—The allied fleets—Thirty-three thousand crimes in one year—Rocco Sileo and his son—The iron hand of Murat—The brigand calling himself Bonaparte—First successes of Manhès in the Cilento and the Abruzzi—The brigand chiefs Basso Tomeo and Antonelli—Useless compromises with brigands—The brigand chief Parafante—How he destroyed a battalion of Franco-Neapolitan troops—The terrible edict of Manhès—Incidents of its execution—The wife of Lieutenant Gerard murdered by brigands—Murder by treachery of Gerard and the authorities of Serra—Manhès banishes Serra from the human family—The brigand chiefs Bizzaro and Orlando—A Calabrian woman—Murder of De Gambs and his lady companion—Manhès goes to Potenza—The brigand chiefs Quagliarella and Taccone—The siege and sack of Baron Federici's castle—Horrid fate of the baron's wife and daughters—The brigand Benincasa—Trial of the captured brigands—Putrid fevers in the prisons of Calabria.

On the 6th of September, 1808, Murat entered Naples as King of the Two Sicilies, and was received, as kings are wont to be received, with

obstreperous applause. He had been preceded by the fame of his military achievements, and his fine person commended him to the Neapolitan eye.

Brigandage was, for the moment, scarcely heard of, which simply means that it had no political character. This was due partly to the rigorous treatment in the last months of Joseph's reign, of all brigands, from Count Rodio and General Fra Diavolo down to the commonest footpads who usurped the name of soldiers of Ferdinand as a cloak for the grossest crimes. The cessation of political brigandage was also due to the lull in the war made by Ferdinand and his allies on the coasts of the kingdom.

The lull was not of long duration. In June, 1809, a fleet of English and Sicilian ships encircled the coasts of the entire kingdom, from Gaeta to the mouth of the Tronto. The fires of brigandage blazed up suddenly and fiercely throughout Calabria, the Basilicata, and the Terra di Lavoro.

Colletta says: "A little after, there issued

from the port of Messina two new expeditions, one of which disbarked in the Gulf of Gioja four hundred brigands and soldiers; the other landed, on the shore between Reggio and Palme, three thousand soldiers, and not a few brigands. The soldiers of Gioja, united to those of Palme, encamped upon the mountains of Melia, and besieged Scilla; while the brigands scattered themselves through the woods and the insufficiently defended districts, exciting the credulous to revolt, killing, robbing, desolating in a thousand ways.

"At the same time, the Anglo-Sicilian fleets were sailing along the coasts of the three seas—Ionian, Tyrrhene and Adriatic, threatening the strong places, assaulting the weak, sending ashore *edicts and brigands, irritations to, and means for, rebellion.*"*

The Anglo-Sicilian fleet accomplished nothing of moment, except lighting up the fires of insurrection throughout the provinces. When the news of the battle of Wagram and the armistice between Napoleon and Austria reached the allied

* "Storia," b. vii. c. xiii.

fleets, they relinquished their undertaking, and quietly returned to Sicily and Malta.

Colletta says:—

"The external war finished, the internal one raged more widely and more frightfully than ever before. The brigands left behind on the mainland had no salvation but in victory, and entering simultaneously into all the provinces of the kingdom, lit them up with a general conflagration."

This is the most bloody period of the Neapolitan brigandage. There were never before such abundant materials for the manufacture of brigands, or so favourable conditions for their desperate adventures. The kingdom had been for ten years in disorder; the French were foreigners; Ferdinand was reigning in Sicily. The chronic uncertainty of authority, acting upon the disbanded armies of Ferdinand and Ruffo, had created the materials; the pretence of patriotism and the stimulants of the Sicilian court supplied the motives for a sanguinary war upon society. Murat's tribunals recorded, in the year 1809, thirty-three thousand viola-

tions of law, almost all affiliated with brigandage.

One of these cases is characteristic of the country and the time.

Rocco Sileo was an honoured citizen of Acerenza, in the Basilicata. His majestic person and white hairs, upright life and generous goodness inspired universal respect. Of a large family, his eldest son alone ever gave him cause for pain. From an early age this boy had manifested the most criminal tendencies, and before his beard was grown became known to the police and courts as a dangerous member of society. Under the system which then prevailed — the Bourbon system—the father bought off his scapegrace son by bribes, which by circuitous channels reached the pockets of the judges.

Finally, in 1809, he committed so gross an offence, that he was condemned by the provincial court to be executed in front of his father's door. The old man had already spent the greater part of his property in vain efforts to parry the hand of justice. He now disposed of the rest, and travelled to Naples with another son, hoping

to influence the decision of the Court of Appeals. His efforts were vain; the sentence of the lower court was confirmed.

The father, who had left his son in Naples to watch the final result, heard the decision of the court, and calmly resolved to defeat the sentence. He asked the guards of the prison to allow him to eat one last meal with his recreant son. The two dined together without a sign of emotion on either side. The father had suffered all the agonies of shame; the son was too imbruted to feel them. When the modest repast was finished, the old man laid a small packet on the table, and said—

"My son, the Court of Naples has rejected our appeal. Your condemnation is confirmed. Within a few hours you will have ceased to live. In what way? Infamously, by the hand of the executioner. In what place? Here, in your native village, before our own door. My patrimony, and that of our family, has all been wasted in your defence. The little vineyard which I planted was sold a month ago. If to our poverty you should choose to add infamy, you will impose

too heavy a burden upon your aged parents, your three sisters, our common name and our posterity. There is only one way, and that is to die to-day. If you have pity for me, for your family, take the poison in this paper, and drink it. If your courage fails you, I shall leave you with my curse. If you drink it, my blessing shall accompany your departing spirit."

The old man uttered the last words with tears which he could not restrain. The son took the paper, poured its contents into a glass of water, kissed his father's right hand, and drank without a word or a sign of emotion. The father stood over him, stretching his bent form to its full height, making three times the sign of the cross, and, with extended hands, conveying his blessing with the mien and dignity of an ancient patriarch.

The facts were all known; the old man concealed nothing. He had redeemed his family from infamy, and gloried in it; he was tried for the murder of his son, and condemned; but the Government, moved by the magnanimous spirit which had prompted the deed, directed the Court

of Appeals to cover with silence a fact which can scarcely happen once in a century, and on whose moral character human judgment cannot safely be trusted to pass sentence. Rocco Sileo was released, and finished his days in an honourable poverty.*

Murat found it absolutely necessary to lay hold of brigandage with an iron hand; even his own person was scarcely safe. It is related that he encountered one day, near Palme, some *gens-d'armes* leading a man with his hands in irons. Murat inquired who the prisoner was. Before the guards could reply, the prisoner spoke up boldly—

"Your majesty, I am a brigand, but I deserve your pardon, for, yesterday, while you were ascending the mountains of Scilla, I was concealed in a thicket for the purpose of killing you. I could have done it. I intended it, and had my gun raised to fire; but your grand and royal aspect took away my courage. If I had killed you yesterday, I should not have been a prisoner to-day."

* Colletta, b. vii. c. xl.

The King pardoned him. The brigand kissed the knees of Murat's horse, and went home to spend the rest of his life an honest labourer.

The iron hand with which Murat crushed brigandage was young Colonel Manhès, afterwards, for his services in this war, raised successively to the rank of brigadier and lieutenant-general.*

In this war with brigands, so foreign to all the instincts of a soldier, this officer acquired fame. He was one of those wonderful soldiers produced in the campaigns of Napoleon, and had spent his life in camps and battles.

Manhès was then only thirty-two years of age, but he had seen fourteen years of active service. He is described as beautiful in person, and, standing with his head uncovered, with his blonde hair flowing in ringlets about his neck, he inspired the rude peasantry, familiar with pictures of the Madonna and her son, with a singular reverence, as a being more than mortal, and

* The principal incidents related in this chapter are derived from the "Memorie Autografe" of General Manhès, compiled by Francesco Montefredine. Naples, 1861.

allied to the objects of their religious veneration. When to these personal charms of his presence was added the fame, exalted beyond bounds, of his success against brigands, he acquired a singular ascendancy over the minds of the superstitious inhabitants of Calabria.

In 1809, Manhès was asked by Murat to undertake the task of restoring order in the provinces. The spirit of the chivalrous soldier recoiled from the foul work, and he made the utmost efforts to escape it. Murat closed the discussion with these words:—

"As your friend, I ask it; as your king, I command you."

Manhès, then holding the rank of colonel and *aide-de-camp* to the king, accepted, in the spirit of military obedience, the perilous and disgusting office.

In the Cilento several bands were plundering under one chief, who had proudly taken the name of Bonaparte. From plundering in the highways and burning villages, he passed to military exploits. At Casalnovo, on the Consular road to the Calabrias, there was a garrison consisting of

a German regiment. The false Bonaparte attacked the fort, was repeatedly repulsed with great loss, but, being constantly reinforced by new bands, finally carried it by assault, and put the whole garrison to the sword; not one escaped to tell the tale of the massacre.

By this exploit the brigand cut off the communications between Naples and Calabria; it was of the first importance to destroy him and his bands. Manhès marched against him with a small force, and for six weeks conducted a war of extermination. He followed the bandits to their wildest retreats, defeated them in their most subtle stratagems, and finally captured, in the almost inaccessible valley of Cuccaro, the chief himself. In these six weeks Manhès killed, or handed over to justice, six hundred bandits. The remainder fled into the Abruzzi, and, reinforced by the highwaymen, assassins and outlaws of these provinces, created a tempest of civil war.

Manhès was made general of brigade, and sent with full powers to repress the disorder in the three Abruzzi. He was successful here also.

In three months he restored peace throughout his military command. The citizens of these provinces, grateful for his courage, activity and success in delivering them from a scourge more fearful than either of the seven plagues of Egypt, erected a monument to him in the city of Vasto.

The thrilling incidents of this campaign are numberless. I condense two of them.

Basso Tomeo was a chief of brigands, having his head-quarters in the vast wood of Pedacciata, who took the title "King of the Campagna." Before the arrival of Murat, he was, in fact, monarch of the region in which he pillaged. He sacked the village of Santobuono, and burned, not merely the houses, but the women and children of soldiers absent in the French service. Manhès captured and killed this assassin.

Antonelli was again in the field, ambitious, perhaps, of a new recognition as a power, which should give him the rank of a general. Manhès captured him, and delighted the populations whom Joseph had insulted in giving the bandit a triumphal entry into Chieti, by reversing it.

Manhès ordered that the most ill-favoured ass that could be found should supply the place of the spirited charger; that Antonelli should be mounted upon this animal with his face to the tail, which served for a bridle; and that, instead of the magnificent uniform of his triumph, he should wear on his head a piece of pasteboard, bearing in large letters the inscription, "*This is the assassin Antonelli.*" In this miserable plight, the brigand colonel was conducted into Lanciano, where an immense crowd, collected from all the villages in the neighbourhood, received him with a tempest of hisses and execrations. On the public square a list of his barbarities was read to the multitude, and the reading was closed by announcing that he would be conducted to his native place to be hung, in the presence of his relatives and the companions of his boyhood.

Manhès displayed, in an exalted degree, the qualities by which Hugo had succeeded in hunting down Fra Diavolo. Not content with exterminating the bands, he kept up the chase until he had captured or killed the chiefs. In these rapid marches and desperate encounters, he did not

rely so much upon the regular soldiery as upon the militia and the peasantry, whom he inspired with loyalty and enthusiasm, or at least awed into obedience.

However, these exploits of Manhès disturbed the consciences of diplomatists much as those of Pinelli have excited the solicitudes of the English Parliament in our own times. It was desirable that the kingdom should seem to be at peace within, and the population content with the French rule.

Napoleon had made a truce with Austria, and was already contemplating his marriage with Maria Louisa. Queen Caroline, who knew all the secrets of diplomacy, improved the occasion to paralyze the French authority in Naples by negotiations carried on through her agents at Vienna and Paris. This led to an abandonment of open war by both parties. The allied fleets sailed back to Palermo, an army of twenty-five thousand men, collected by Murat for the conquest of Sicily, remained idle in Calabria, and the government of Murat resorted to proclamations of pardon and treaties of peace with assassins.

Brigandage increased under this combination of circumstances. The promise of pardon emboldened the bandits, and in treaties they were much too astute for the local police, to whom the work was assigned. On the other side, Queen Caroline redoubled her secret practices with the priests, the disaffected nobility and the assassins of the provinces. As in our time, the confessional was desecrated by exhortations to murder and arson. The sentiment of nationality—a sentiment then unknown in the provinces—and the divine rights of Ferdinand were pleaded at home and abroad as a pretext for every species of crime. If the village burned was chiefly inhabited by partisans of the French—if the men, women, and children butchered were French or their friends, the perpetrators of these deeds could find absolution and promise of earthly rewards at the nearest church.

The year 1810 opened with these presages of a summer of unexampled disorder. The Calabrias became the scene of reaction and brigandage, so artfully combined as to present the appearance of revolution. The twenty-five thousand French

troops were powerless to repress this eruption of passion and barbarity. The police attempted to make peace by arresting the friends of the brigands, and holding them as hostages for the good behaviour of the bandits. The brigands retorted by siezing partisans of the government and demanding the release of their friends. The brigands conquered at this game; they made conditions at their pleasure, selecting the plenipotentiaries, the time and the place for conferences. I give one instance.

A Frenchman, named Astrac, an *employé* of the government, was travelling from Calabria to Naples. In the wood of St. Eufemia he was captured, and given to understand that his release would depend upon the previous release of all the friends of the brigands then in prison, whether or not they were related to members of that band. This condition was accepted, and the chief added that provisions and clothing must be sent to him and his men. This, too, was accepted. By this means, the band obtained not only the prostration of the moral authority of the government, but also the means for waging its sanguinary war.

The name of this brigand was PARAFANTE. There is no bloodier name in the annals of brigandage. The following is one of the incidents of his infamous career :—

Between Cosenza and Rogliano, in a narrow defile of the mountains, he surprised a battalion of soldiers. The first notice of the attack came in an avalanche of stones rolled down from the overhanging cliffs. Those who were not crushed were blinded with dust, and their unseen enemy poured upon them a terrible fire of musketry. Having killed all but twenty-five of the soldiers and two officers, Parafante put a stop to this method of slaughter, which bore too great a resemblance to regular war to satisfy his bloody instincts. The prisoners were disarmed, collected under a tree, and surrounded by the brigands. Parafante put on a smiling air, and said—

"I am grieved, soldiers, for your melancholy condition, and I would be glad to liberate you, but I have made a vow to St. Antonio not to spare one of you. However, considering that you are not volunteer soldiers, but conscripts, I bow to my own sense of pity. You must, how-

ever, give me a proof of your gratitude by putting to death these two dogs, your officers. If you will do this, I swear by the Immaculate Virgin to spare you. If not, you shall all die an infamous death."

The soldiers refused to purchase their lives on these horrible terms, but their intrepid officers besought, and finally commanded them to execute the orders of Parafante.

The two officers were yet writhing in agony, when Parafante, nodding to his men, turned away, as if to rest from the fatigues of the day, and the brigands fell upon and butchered the prisoners with every refinement of atrocity.

Murat resolved to attempt again the forcible destruction of this terrible social scourge. Manhès was with difficulty induced to enter anew upon the work. He demanded and received full powers, and took the field as the *alter ego* of the King. On the 9th of October, 1810, he established his head-quarters at Monteleone, in Calabria, and issued his first order of the day. This proclamation may be summed up as follows:—

1. That a list of the brigands belonging to each commune should be published, and thereafter it should be the right and duty of every citizen to arrest or kill the bandits wherever they might be found.

2. Every man capable of bearing arms was called into service.

3. Whoever held correspondence with the outlaws, or furnished them with anything whatever, even though the brigand were a husband or a son, incurred the penalty of death.

4. The fathers and brothers of brigands were called under arms.

5. The flocks and herds were required to be driven to certain guarded places.

6. All work in the country was suspended, or permitted only when the labourers did not need to carry food for their use.

7. Companies of soldiers were placed in every district, not to chase brigands, but to watch the inhabitants, and to see that the orders of the general were executed.

8. A day was appointed in which a simultaneous chase of the brigands should begin

throughout the Calabrias, from Rotonda to Reggio.

9. It was made the duty of the priests in every parish to read this proclamation to their flocks, and to exhort them to obey it.

These orders were so strict that no one believed they would be executed; but Manhès soon convinced the brigands and the people that he was in earnest.

A white-haired old man was found in a wood near Cosenza giving food to his brigand son. Both were executed; and to give terror to the example, the father was obliged to witness the death of his son before sharing his fate.

Eleven women and children, belonging to Stilo, went one day to gather olives on a farm at some distance. They took with them some bread to eat at mid-day. They were encountered by some soldiers, the bread was found upon them, and the entire party were shot. History has dropped the veil of modesty over the method by which one of these women sought to save, not her own life, but that of a child eleven years of age.

In the wood of St. Biase the wife of a brigand, who was hiding with her husband, gave birth to a child. The babe by its cries endangered the safety of its parents, and, in case flight should be necessary, would be a serious impediment. The mother carried it by night to Nicastro, awakened a female friend, gave her the child, and returned to her husband. Manhès heard of the circumstance, and gave orders that the babe should be carefully provided for, but that the woman who had received it should suffer death.

A peasant delivered a small quantity of flour to some brigands, receiving for it the enormous sum of fifty ducats. He was shot with a purse containing the fifty ducats appended to his neck.

These rigours were terrible. It is difficult, rather it seems impossible to justify them; but they produced excellent fruits. The people became thoroughly convinced of the necessity of implicit obedience, and the line was drawn with appalling distinctness between the brigands and the rest of society. The bandits were outlawed, set apart, accursed, they were to be hunted and killed like wild beasts.

Manhès was accustomed to say afterwards, that if his orders had been every where obeyed, brigandage would have been annihilated in ten days. His reasoning was simple. A man cannot exist more than ten days without food. If his orders had been obeyed, no brigand in hiding would have obtained a crust of bread, and if he had ventured out to obtain it himself, he would have been arrested or shot like a wolf. But though there were many violations of the proclamation which could not be reached and punished, yet, so complete was the success of Manhès that, while at the beginning of November his published list enumerated three thousand brigands, at the end of the year not a single one remained.

The rigour of these orders was tempered with an amnesty similar to that adopted in 1863 by the Italian Government. The brigands who presented themselves saved their lives, but they were condemned to imprisonment and trial. In this way, twelve hundred surrendered, and were consigned to the prisons of Calabria. A few who had depots of provisions or were able to descend upon the country in considerable bands continued

to hide in the almost inaccessible mountains of Gualdo, Pollino, Campotanese, Sila, and Aspromonte until near the close of the year; but finally all surrendered, fled, or were exterminated.

Some had escaped into the Basilicata, and while the rigorous measures of Manhès were producing their salutary effects in Calabria, the adjoining provinces were overrun with assassins. The authority of Manhès was extended to the Basilicata, the Principates, the Terra d'Otronto and Bari. The young General transferred his head-quarters to Potenza, and extended to the new provinces of his command the principal provisions of his orders in the Calabrias; and with equal success.

The historians are all agreed in representing that the roads had never been so secure, the trade over the country so safe, and the public peace so general as at the end of the year 1810. It seemed like a sudden change from barbarism to civilization.*

I now return upon some of the incidents of this campaign.

* Botta, b. xxiv.

Lieutenant Gerard was stationed at Serra, on the sides of Aspromonte. His wife, who was one of the most beautiful women of her time, undertook to join him while brigandage was at its height. She was accompanied by a file of troops. After having been exhausted by frequent and sudden assaults of the brigands of Castrovillari, the troops were at last taken in a disadvantageous position, and all shot down.

The unfortunate woman, spared for her beauty, suffered every indignity and was finally killed.

Not long after the brigands of Serra and Mongiana informed the municipal authorities of the former place that they desired to surrender according to the orders of General Manhès.

They stipulated that, to save them from public indignity, the rendition should take place at night, and in a house agreed upon.

Gerard and the civil authorities accepted the conditions, kept the appointment, and were all murdered. Manhès heard of the atrocious crime, and resolved upon a summary punishment. With an escort of fifty lancers, he set out for Serra, moving by the shortest roads, and arrived so

suddenly, that the blare of his trumpets, terrible as that of the Last Day, gave the first notice of his approach.

He rode into the public square, and the first objects that his eyes encountered were some bloody human heads. Turning to some persons near him, he inquired—

"What horrible thing is this?"

"General, we are the friends of the civil authorities killed in that night. We have taken vengeance upon some of our neighbours who had part in the treachery. Ask anybody. You will find that these were killed by our hands."

The General turned away, sickened at the spectacle, and still more at the fierce barbarity of these avengers of blood.

He spent the night in a painful study upon the problem which this case presented. Should he take vengeance for the murder of Gerard, as these mountaineers had avenged their friends? But to what purpose? Sights of blood did not appal people bred in the presence of assassination. The taking of life did not reach the sensi-

bilities of these men. Some other means must be devised to probe them to the quick of their moral nature.

His previous general orders had gone a long way towards outlawing the brigands, and this was the first step towards the extinction of brigandage; but here was a people among whom a horrid treachery had been consummated, and the population had made no effort to punish the crime. Private revenge, then and now the curse of the Neapolitan provinces, had been taken, perhaps upon the innocent, but, at all events, this work only tended to imbrute still more the violent character of these men.

Manhès resolved to extend the principle of his proclamation to the inhabitants of Serra. He would outlaw them, cut them off from society, reduce them to the level of brutes. There was one, and only one, way to accomplish this; Manhès was not the man to shrink from any means to a desirable end. He, *a laymen, excommunicated the town*. No one who does not understand the nature of these men can comprehend what is meant in that sentence. Their ten-

der place was and is their intense religious superstition. It was for this reason, as well as for their complicity with brigandage, that Manhès had required the priests to read and enforce his orders to the people.

The next morning Manhès collected the inhabitants upon the public square, and addressed them. They expected a sack of the village, with, perhaps, a dozen executions, and had spent the night in removing their effects to the woods. Manhès, from long service in Italy, not only spoke Italian fluently, but is said to have had great facility in the dialects of the Neapolitan provinces. He spoke to them standing among them with his pale face and bared head, looking royal and grand as a divine person.

The substance of his address as preserved in his memoirs, was as follows:—

"The sack of your village and the death of you all would be a small punishment for your want of faith and humanity. I decree a greater punishment than this. From now forward, I condemn you to be no longer a part of human society. You have acted like brute beasts, and

brute beasts you shall be. I degrade you from the rank of mankind, I take from you the aid and comfort of the divine law. I exclude you from all part or lot in the Church or the State. I order and decree that your churches be closed, and your priests, without one exception, be shut up in the prison at Maida. The communes around you will have orders to draw a cordon about you, and to shoot whoever, without my orders, shall attempt to cross the line.

"Your children shall be born without baptism. Your old men shall die without the sacraments. Your young men and women shall marry as the beasts of the field. They shall have no magistrate to unite them, no priest to bless them. And this is my inexorable, implacable sentence. I abandon you to your infamous destiny."

This is the substance of this singular address. It was delivered with indescribable fervour and emphasis, adorned with every figure of speech that could strike these vivid imaginations, aflame with the intense heat of that passionately resolute will.

The fright of the people was terrible; but the

priests, who were moral accomplices in the late crime, and who could not believe in excommunication by a layman, endeavoured to subdue the popular fear by assurances that the sentence never could be, never would be, carried out. They did not know Manhès. He gave orders to the militia of the communes around Serra to shoulder their muskets on a given day and draw a cordon around the condemned district. Then he ordered the priests to be conducted to Maida. The black cohort set off on foot under convoy of the national guard, leaving tears, lamentations, indescribable distress, behind them. So rigorously was Manhès' order executed, that an old bed-ridden priest was carried on the shoulders of the guard. Arrived at Maida, the old priest was lodged with the parish clerk, and the rest locked up in prison.

Manhès was present in person to secure the execution of these orders; no other man could have enforced them. When the priests had disappeared, he set out to leave the town. Outside of it he encountered a procession of spectres, "filling the air with sighs and woes." It was the entire population, kneeling by the roadside, beat-

ing their breasts with stones, and imploring pardon, or any other fate than this.

"Kill us at once, but do not torment us with eternal pains."

The inexorable Manhès put spurs to his horse, and was soon out of sight, leaving universal dejection behind him. The sentence had been executed, and Serra was cut from both human and divine relations and sympathies.

One of the proprietors in the city said to the people—

"There is only one way of escape. You know the brigands who murdered Gerard. 'Capture or kill them, and Manhès will pardon you."

Inspired with this hope, the whole population gave chase, on a given day, and did not rest until every one of the assassins had been killed or captured. The General, informed of this proceeding, revoked his sentence, and restored the inhabitants of Serra to the bosom of the human family. The entire population went in procession to Maida to reconduct their spiritual shepherds, and the re-establishment of religion in the village was celebrated with imposing ceremonies. Serra was

thoroughly cured of the brigandage disease. The change in the people was marvellous. Before, the taxes had not been paid, nor the conscription executed; a strong guard had been found necessary to enforce some semblance of order. Now taxes were paid, conscripts flocked to the station, and even a small fort situated there was entrusted to the charge of the local militia, who executed the orders of the General with unexampled fidelity. These rude mountaineers testified their respect for the inexorable general by changing their ordinary objurgation, "*By St. Devil,*" into, "*By St. Manhès.*"

Bizzaro, one of the most barbarous brigand chiefs, continued to escape the vigilance of Manhès until late in the year. He kept, after the fashion of slave-catchers, to pursue his victims, a brace of dogs, whose appetite for human blood he stimulated by feasting them upon the bodies of those whom he assassinated.

His early career illustrates the history of brigands in general. At nineteen years of age he was in the service of a farmer, whose daughter he seduced. The brothers of the girl, discover-

ing the seduction, fell upon him with their knives, covered him with gashes, and left him for dead. His body was transported into the church of the village to be left there until morning. During the night he revived, and dragged himself to the neighbouring mountains, where he took up the life of a brigand, in company with a band who were monarchs of that part of the kingdom of Ferdinand. In the ranks of brigandage the best, that is to say, the most daring and unscrupulous, becomes the leader. There is a free field for merit, or rather for demerit. Bizzaro soon exhibited the qualities belonging to a chief, and was by acclamation elected captain of the company. He had not forgotten the vengeance of the brothers of his mistress, and years after obtained vengeance in his turn.

The inhabitants of this village were, one Sunday, assembled in the church in which his body had been left for burial. Suddenly, the church was surrounded by the band of Bizzaro. The chief took his position in the door, and with the air of an emperor, ordered the people to file past him. He found in the procession two of

the young men whom he sought, and he butchered them with his own hand. The other three, found crouching behind the altar, shared the same fate. From the church he passed to the house of his former master, where he encountered the poor girl, and her father. He stabbed the old man to the heart, in spite of the tears and remonstrances of his mistress, who fainted at the spectacle. Then, having satiated his vengeance, he took up the senseless form of the girl, and fled back to his fastnesses in the mountains. The girl became a brigand, and clothed as a man, shared in the most perilous adventures of Bizzaro.

All this happened under the happy reign of Ferdinand. During the reign of Joseph, the mistress of Bizzaro was captured in an encounter with the French troops, and died a few months afterwards in one of the prisons of Monteleone.

Of the barbarity of Bizzaro, the most frightful tales are told. This among others. It illustrates by what means the peasants are awed into the service of brigandage.

A young shepherd had served as a guide to the French troops, not of his free will, but by

compulsion. Bizzaro captured him, cut his throat like an ox, and, having cut his body into small pieces, boiled it for a soup of which he and his companions ate. He took good care that the fact should be known for the terror of all other peasants.

After the defeat of General Regnier at St. Eufemia, Bizzaro made a triumphal entry into Palme, the fame of which yet survives in the traditions of that town. He was received with imposing ceremonies by the priests and other Bourbonists. A *Te Deum* was chanted in honour of his exploits, closed with vivas for Queen Caroline and Bizzaro.

This was the apogee of his glory. He was honoured with autograph letters from the Queen, and made several voyages into Sicily to concert with the Bourbon court the means of sanguinary rebellion.

The events thus far related of Bizzaro occurred between the years 1801 and 1810. The system of Manhès led to the destruction of this prince of barbarity.

At this time Bizzaro had found a new mis-

tress, who, as the former one, accompanied him in his wanderings but without herself sharing in the crimes of her lord. The rigorous measures of the General had led to the death or surrender of all the companions of Bizzaro, except this woman who bore a young child in her arms. Persecuted by the militia, he had taken refuge in a cave which he supposed to be known only to himself. The woman and child were with him. It was near the end of the year. The mountains were covered with snow, and the valleys ran torrents of rain. The child, whom the discomforts of this life and the want of nourishment had rendered feeble and irritable, kept up an almost incessant cry. Bizzaro said to his mistress:—

"Woman, this child of yours seems determined to betray me to my enemies."

She responded with tears and vain efforts to hush the cries of her babe.

Bizzaro rose, took the child by its legs and dashed out its brains against the rocky side of the cavern.

The mother was a Calabrian, and masked her

grief while she meditated her revenge. The next night, while Bizzaro slept, she blew out his brains. Nor is this all. She severed his head from his body, wrapped it in a piece of clothing, and carried it some miles to the military station, where she asked an interview with the commandant.

"I am told that you offer a reward of a thousand ducats for the head of the brigand Bizzaro?"

"It is true."

"Here is his head, give me the money."

The identity was proved and the money paid to her. She counted it over with the impassibility of a peasant woman receiving her pay for a basket of eggs.

Now, will it be believed that "thirty-five years afterwards this woman was living at Mileto an affectionate wife and mother"? The fact is stated by the author of the "Memoirs of General Manhès," and those familiar with the Calabrian character will not doubt it.

There has never been a repression of brigandage which has not sown the seeds of a new growth

of brigands. One of the sources of the disorder which breaks out at every opportunity, is the favour which is shown, under the most rigorous administrations, to bandit chiefs. Successful brigandage is a road to honour. Even the destructive system of Manhès left exceptions to stimulate the ambition of the young Calabrians.

ORLANDO was a rival of Bizzaro, less bloody in his tastes, but equally daring and exceedingly troublesome to Manhès. Of his relations to Bizzaro this anecdote is told.

He had given a safe conduct to some mule-drivers of his native village, Spillingo, who had occasion to carry some grain to market and could not safely undertake the journey without the permission of the brigands. On their return from the market some men belonging to Bizzaro's band arrested and robbed the muleteers.

The latter complained to Orlando, who went, raging like a lion, to the head-quarters of Bizzaro.

"Your people," said Orlando, "jest with me and insult my authority. I must have an example at once."

Bizzaro was about to sit down to his dinner, and replied—

"Do what you will, comrade, but be quick, for I am hungry."

The muleteers were called on to point out the robbers. Orlando killed them, one by one, with his knife, and caused their dead bodies to be hung to a tree.

Orlando was menaced by the proclamations of Manhès, and began to find difficulty in securing safe retreats. Meeting one day a French officer, Orlando spared his life with a chivalrous magnanimity, which the officer repaid by procuring, not merely a pardon, but a commission as captain in the militia, for the bandit chief.

In the Basilicata, Quagliarella and Taccone were reigning when Manhès established his headquarters at Potenza. The former held the northern, the latter the southern, portion of the province. I condense a few of the incidents in the career of each.

QUAGLIARELLA first attracted the marked attention of the Government by murdering General de Gambs and a young Neapolitan woman, who were

travelling in his district. The father of De Gambs had been an abettor of Ruffo in '99, and the son was consumed by the fires which his parent had helped to kindle. The circumstances of this crime are touching in the extreme. They were travelling from Vietri to Potenza and fell into an ambush prepared by the brigand leader in the wood of Marmo. When the assassins assailed them, they had no alternative but to flee, and plunging their horses into the wood dashed away for their lives. The General lost sight of his companion, and turned back to seek her. After some time spent in a fruitless search, his ears were saluted by her dying cries. Roused to desperation, he plunged into the midst of the assassins and lost his life fighting to avenge her whom he came too late to save.

It was this incident which led to the sending of Manhès to Potenza. De Gambs was a general, and his death reached the ears of the King, who was his personal friend. Throughout all the governments of the two Sicilies, brigands have been free to murder the unknown and the weak. Only when their bloody hands have been laid

upon the rich and the noble, or have assumed to contest in battle with the royal arms, have brigands encountered the vengeance of the supreme power. Quagliarella might have murdered a thousand small farmers, their wives and children with impunity. For the death of De Gambs, he was condemned by Manhès, and the sentence of this man was as inexorable as doom: One by one, the followers of Quagliarella deserted him, were captured, or killed. The whole population of his district was leagued against him by the iron system of the French General. Abandoned, hunted down, famishing for want of food, he one day encountered some reapers in Ricigliano. They killed him, received the thousand ducats and divided them among themselves with religious exactness.

TACCONE reigned like an emperor over half the Basilicata. Until the arrival of Manhès, he successfully resisted, in many a bloody encounter, the national guards and regular troops. Sometimes in the thick of an encounter in a lonely wood or a deep valley, his whole force would flee in a thousand directions, to fall, in half an hour

after, like an avalanche on the back of the enemy, who was exulting in the confidence of victory. He seemed to have wings to his feet, and flew from one village to another, from one side of a mountain to its opposite, with a celerity which seemed incredible.

He was attacked, near night, in a wood at some distance from Potenza. He stubbornly resisted the assault of the troops, and, as night closed in, the soldiers rested on their arms, confident of a brilliant victory in the morning.

At break of day, the troops were chagrined to find no trace of the enemy. Taccone was at the gates of Potenza. In the style of the days of chivalry, he sent a herald to summon the chief men of the town to visit him with tokens of submission.

The most important personages of the city, followed by the clergy and a crowd of people, presented themselves in humble and beseeching attitudes before him. Having kept them on their knees for some time, waiting with trembling his decision of their fate, he addressed them with an air of magnanimity mingled with disdain.

"Arise, miserable wretches, you are beneath my wrath. But woe to you if I had caught you at any other time. I have fought and conquered my enemies. To-day is a feast for all the just, and I do not wish to soil my hands with your blood. But as a punishment for your rebellion against your king and your God, you will pay within an hour such a tax as my secretary shall assign. In the meantime let us march to the cathedral, where Monsignor, the Bishop, will chant the Ambrosian hymn, as a thanksgiving for the success of our arms."

The procession entered the city chanting the services of the church with loud voices, and waving olive branches in their hands. The clergy, perhaps not unwillingly, celebrated his pretended victories with solemn pomp.

Taccone levied a heavy contribution and departed, taking with him a still more precious object. In his march to the cathedral he saw at one of the windows along the street a beautiful girl, scarcely fifteen years of age; nodding to one of his lieutenants he pursued his way to the Duomo. The girl was taken by the brigands,

and given to understand that she was to be honoured with the love of their illustrious master. Her friends made every effort to avert her fate, and offered to reduce themselves to beggary to save her. Taccone listened to their pleadings without emotion, and disdainfully replied—

"I do not make merchandise of matters of the heart. Perdition take you and your money."

No certain tidings of the unfortunate girl's fate ever reached the ears of her friends. The most consoling of the accounts afterwards given by the companions of Taccone was, that she having resisted with firmness all the blandishments of the assassin, he had one day in a fit of anger stabbed her to the heart.

The next attempt of Taccone was upon the castle of Baron Federici, a bitter enemy of the Bourbons. The retainers of the baron made a vigorous defence for a whole day; and he might have held his position until relieved, but that he was insufficiently supplied with ammunition. On the second day, the band of Taccone was largely swollen by peasantry of the neighbourhood who had scented the prey, and hoped to share in the

sack of the castle. The retainers of the baron, perhaps half sympathizing with their peasant comrades outside, urged him to surrender on the most favourable terms. The Baron knew his foe too well to expect faith or mercy; but finding resistance hopeless, with a frail hope of saving his family, he sent word to Taccone that he would surrender conditionally. The messengers received from Taccone this answer—

"Tell the baron that the castle is mine, the persons of the prisoners shall be safe."

The castle was sacked, then the out-buildings were set on fire, and the wife and daughters of the baron, with their female attendants, compelled to dance with the brigands round the flames. The Baron, seeing in what all this mockery must end, threw himself into the flames and perished. Taccone, who was forcing one of the daughters to share with him this dance of death, expressed to her his regret that the Baron had not waited to witness their nuptials, and adding that the father ought to have company, he thrust his youngest son into the fire. By some miracle this child escaped; but the women, subjected first to horri-

ble nuptials, were one by one consigned to the flames.

These achievements rendered Taccone insolent and rash. When Manhès arrived at Potenza he had the hardihood to venture upon the same course with him which he had successfully pursued with other generals. The young general drew his lines around Taccone, cut the relations between him and the peasantry, and finally captured him in a desperate encounter.

He was conducted into Potenza mounted backwards on an ass, and wearing an inscription, "*This is the infamous Taccone.*" The same population which two months before had chanted the *Te Deum* in honour of his exploits, received him with hisses and yells, which were probably about as sincere as their former ovation.

I have related the barbarous murder of the officers, Filangieri and Guarasi, and the soldiers under their command, by Parafante. For this crime Manhès doomed him, and his decisions were final. The brigand had twice before escaped into Sicily. The young General took care to close up this line of retreat, and kept

careful watch upon all the movements of the band. Finally, he ordered a general hunt of the region within which Parafante was enclosed. In eight or ten days, this chase captured or exterminated the greater part of the band, and shut up the chief with six companions in the wood at Nicastro. Among these companions was a woman who had for some time shared his adventures. In this wood a new attack was made upon him, and this time he lost his five male associates, four of whom were killed and one captured; but he himself fled with his mistress, closely pursued by the militia. A musket ball struck the woman and she fell. Parafante turned to succour or avenge her, and a volley of musketry brought him to the ground with both his legs broken. It was the first time, in his long career as a brigand, that he had been wounded. He fell upon his knees, but such was his reputation for strength and intrepidity that no one of his assailants dared to approach him. Perhaps admiration for his courage withheld them from firing upon him in that condition. One of the soldiers, however, made a detour,

and getting behind him in the bushes, thrust his knife through the foliage into the breast of Parafante, who uttered a cry of pain, and fell backwards as if dead. The soldier approached to rifle his pockets. Parafante seized him in his arms, and plunged his own knife into the back of his assailant. The soldiers running up found both dead, locked in this bloody embrace.

BENINCASA was the terror of Calabria under the kingdom of Joseph. When Manhès entered upon his campaign, this chief was infesting the region of Nicastro, and had his base in the wood of St. Eufemia.

According to Manhès, this brigand was killed by the militia on the river Amato, not far from Montelcone. Colletta assigns him a more horrid death under the orders of Manhès.

During this campaign, every chief of brigands in the province was either killed, or captured and executed; and their companions shared their fate or were shut up in the prisons. The success of Manhès must be largely ascribed to his energy, activity and personal influence over the population; but these qualities would not have secured

his victories, but for that system by which he severed the ties which have from time immemorial united the brigand to society. In the year of grace 1864, the brigand has a wife and a family, a house in some village where he resides when it suits his convenience: he has his church, his priest, his annual absolution for the sins of the year, the sympathy of a part of his compatriots, means of minute and accurate information respecting the movements of Italian troops, the blessings of the Pope, and the grateful praises of Francis Bourbon. As if this were not enough to secure him an honourable place in society, he has not wanted for advocates in the highest legislative bodies of England and France.

A military commission was appointed to decide the fate of the prisoners crowded into every dungeon of Calabria. It was instructed to divide the prisoners into three classes:—

1. The chiefs and those whose crimes had been infamous were to be condemned to death.

2. The brigands of mature age not convicted of infamous crimes were to be sentenced to the penal works for life.

3. The young men, who had been seduced by reactionary priests and other partisans of Ferdinand, were to be enrolled in the regiments designed for service outside of the kingdom.

The labours of the commission were anticipated and lessened by a putrid fever which broke out in some of the prisons and made deadly havoc. These men—who had breathed all their lives the free, bracing air of the mountains, drank from the springs and streams under their native rocks, and lived a life of incessant activity—when shut up in dark, ill-ventilated, filthy and unhealthy prisons, languished under confinement, and fell easy victims to the malignant and putrescent fevers which visited them. The deaths were frightfully numerous, and it seemed as if Divine condemnation made haste to anticipate the judgment of man.

These strong men who had never known fear, tossing upon their pallets of straw, fought over again their battles, and repeated the incidents of their most infamous crimes. Imagination and conscience arraigned them before the judges who were to sit upon their fate. They heard the

accusations and denied, heard the evidence and confessed. Then came the awful sentence of death; then the scaffold and the hangman. The lurid dream at this point shook the patients with an appalling dread, and uttering piercing cries, they seemed to escape. They wandered away to green fields and bosky hills, to early love and home peacefulness, to the priest who blessed them, to that other priest who in the name of God and the King incited them to transgress the laws and imperil their souls. Sooner or later, the changing scenery of these spectral tragedies conducted them back again to the words of doom pronounced by the judge arrayed in black robes, to the scaffold with its paraphernalia of death. These ravings often continued until the death they dreaded in the distance, but did not feel at their pillows, gently severed the thread of life.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER THE RESTORATION, 1815—1860.

Ferdinand returns—Common brigandage—Rigorous measures of the Government—Power of the Juntas—Convenience of the system—Atrocious murder of a whole family—Condemnation of the assassins—A pardon which came too late—The brigand Ronga—Why he was pardoned—The Vardarelli—Gaetano, the chief—Success of this band—Capture of Major Alponte—A ludicrous burlesque of the Caudine Forks—Treaty offensive and defensive between Ferdinand and Gaetano—A pack of human blood-hounds—Fidelity of Gaetano—Infidelity of Ferdinand—A new set of hounds—Death of Gaetano—The review in Foggia—Treacherous murder of the Vardarelli—A singular exception—Strange paths to eminence under the Bourbons—Beppo di Furia and his alliances—A fruitless confession—A needless alarm—How the governor of Foggia gained his promotion—General Pepe in Foggia—Brigandage general—Pepe's Carbonari militia—The thousandth suppression of brigandage—The chief Minotti—Two thousand ducats for poisons and poisoners—Brigandage in the Terra d'Otranto—Don Ciro, the priest-robber—His love and his vengeance—Assassination of a whole family—Four years of prison life—Don Ciro leaves prison—Becomes a brigand—His atrocious deeds—A singular siege—Taking down the heads of executed brigands from the church-towers—A treaty with Portugal

for the transportation of convicts—Revolution of 1820—Ferdinand's third flight—Reign of Francis I.—The second Ferdinand—How he governed Naples.

THE fate of the kingdom of Murat was bound up in that of Napoleon, and fell with the First Empire. Ferdinand, restored to the throne of Naples, resumed the reins of authority on the 23rd of May, 1815.

Political brigandage does not reappear until the fall of the Bourbons in 1860. The reason is simple. The enemies of the two Ferdinands used less ignoble weapons, and these sovereigns were never in circumstances so desperate as to need to employ this scourge of their people. But common brigandage kept its humble paths in the mountains, its soldiers seldom winning commissions in the army, but living a comparatively free and safe life among their native hills.

Feats of arms and brutal atrocities are seldom recorded of common brigandage. It contents itself with highway robbery and ordinary assassination. The leaders are men who have become, on account of crimes—usually homicides—obnoxious to the tribunals, and from time immemo-

rial, whoever in these provinces has need to expatriate himself, flees to the mountains. Here, neither the police nor extradition laws can lay violent hands upon him. The terror of his name procures him from the peasants beneath him, all those commercial privileges and social civilities which a provincial Neapolitan cares to enjoy. He has a wife and children; and he generally contrives to make himself so respectable a person in the eyes of society and of authority, that his children may pursue more regular lives—pointed at with pride or envy as the sons of a renowned king of the mountains. The Bourbons were scarcely restored and the terrible iron hand of Murat paralyzed, when this ordinary brigandage assumed such proportions that the government felt justified in taking measures which were essentially unjust while equally rigorous with those of Manhès.

A junta, composed of the governor, military commandant, and president of the criminal court, prepared in each province a list of the bandits. A price was put upon the head of each brigand, and every man had the right to kill them wher-

ever he should find them. The price for arresting and delivering malefactors to justice was the same as that for killing them. When brigands were put on trial, the decree provided that the office of the court should consist simply in determining the identity of the prisoner; his crimes had been proved by the insertion of his name in the black list. The penalty was immediate death, and there was no appeal.

The system of Manhès was less dangerous than this. It was military law, rigorous, dangerous, if you will, but impartial. The ultimate judgment upon his work must depend upon the decision of a question which is always decided in one way by men of action, and in just the opposite by philosophers seated in safety by their firesides: whether, in times of public danger, a public man can be justified in endangering the lives of innocent people, in order to save society or a nation. The Bourbon system sketched above was adopted, not against political, but against common brigandage; and yet it was more perilous to innocent people than the iron hand of Murat.

Colletta says: "The unlimited power of these juntas required of their members a superhuman prudence, good sense, and justice; but, in fact, their decisions were precipitate and rash. So much so, that the names and descriptions of the bandits were frequently exchanged with those of innocent men, who were thus inscribed in the bloody lists. Others were inscribed because public rumour or their absence—perhaps forgotten in prison, or serving in the army—indicated them as robbers. Many of these mistakes were discovered and corrected, many more were covered by the mantle of death. During the ten years of French rule, there had not been so much rigour in the juntas. Then they did not put a price upon lives, and the accused had trial with the common forms of defence and debate."*

This system had its conveniences. Under it, with less noise than by the violation of treaties, those who had served Murat with zeal, could be put beyond the power of abetting another revolution. Add to this, the vast field which it gave to private vengeance on the part of the judges, to bribery of

* "Storia," b. vii. c. x.

the juntas in the interest of the revenge of others, and it will be seen that the happy kingdom of Ferdinand had gained little by the change back to his fatherly protection.

Nor was the intervention of the juntas always necessary. In the village of Piaggine, province of Salerno, there was living a family, by name Pugli, which had been zealous for the old government, but which was honest and respectable. Some of Ferdinand's assassins assaulted the house of these people in open day—more, on a feast—and calling it a house of Jacobins, sacked and burnt it. All the family, consisting of five persons, of various age and sex, were bound with cords and dragged to the public square. A mass of dry wood and other combustibles was then arranged in a circle, piled to a considerable height. The unhappy prisoners were thrust within it, and the combustibles fired. When the whole mass was in a blaze, the diabolical assassins pushed it over upon their victims, some of whom tried to escape, but were driven back to perish. In this way, five innocent persons met with an inhuman death. When the fires were spent, there lay the blackened

corpse of a mother, who had covered her two young children with her own body. The babes were dead, but had not been touched by fire. Among them was a priest. He lay with his hands crossed reverently on his breast.

I have said that this crime was perpetrated with the utmost possible publicity. The assassins did not attempt to fly, but remained in the village boasting of their exploit. The local military tribunal arrested, tried and condemned eleven of them to suffer death. The advocate who defended them went to Naples, reminded the king that these condemned persons had rendered important services to Ferdinand as brigands under Murat, and obtained a pardon. He returned in all haste to Salerno, but arrived too late. Ferdinand's brigands had fallen into the trap set for his enemies, and had already been executed under the edict for summary punishments. The judges who had passed and executed this sentence were devoted to the king, but he punished them all for their misapplied zeal.*

A brigand named Ronga was tried and con-

* Colletta, "Storia," b. vii. c. x.

demned in Reggio. His crimes were numerous and horrible. One of a thousand was the following:—His wife was with him, and gave birth to a child, whose cries disturbed the quiet, perhaps endangered the safety, of its unnatural father. Ronga dashed out its brains against a tree. The mother wept at the horrid spectacle, and he, indignant at her tears, shot her. She fell dead on the body of her child.

Ronga did not even abandon the place where the corpses lay day after day, but ate and slept in the presence of his decaying wife and child. The military tribunal condemned him to death. Ferdinand pardoned him, because he was able to show that he had been a brigand under Murat, and had only escaped Manhès by a precipitous flight into Sicily.*

The Vardarelli, a band of brigands, who took their title from the name of their leaders, acquired under the first Ferdinand, not only the esteem of their compatriots, but a place in history which is honourable in comparison with that of the king,

* Colletta, "Storia," b. vii. c. x.

who first stooped to treat with them, and then treacherously killed them.

GAETANO VARDARELLI, the chief of this band, was of humble birth, but boundless ambition. He became a soldier under Murat, and afterwards deserted. He went to Sicily, and sought favour from the Sicilian court. But a deserter from the ranks of Murat's army had little claim to honour at Palermo. Determined to force a recognition of his value, Vardarelli betook himself to the life of a highwayman in Sicily. This led to his being proscribed by Ferdinand, and he fled back to his native woods and hills to pursue the modest life of a common brigand. Manhès was still in the provinces, and Vardarelli was forced to flee back to Sicily, bearing the fame of some successful encounters with small bodies of Franco-Neapolitan troops. His appeals to the Sicilian court were now successful. He was no longer a simple deserter from the army of Murat, but he had been a criminal in Sicily, and a brigand on the Peninsula. He received pardon for his crimes in the island, and became a sergeant in the army of his king.

After the return of Ferdinand to Naples, in

1815, finding the path to promotion in the regular service slow and uncertain, his pay far below his desires, and the service dull and insipid, Vardarelli deserted from the army of Ferdinand, as he had from that of Murat, and took up his former life on the mountains.

His company consisted of two of his brothers, three other relatives, and about forty other men—"all," says Colletta, "as bad as himself." Over these men Vardarelli reigned as a tyrant. He punished the smallest offences with extreme rigour, and visited cowardice with death. In his intercourse with the subjects of Ferdinand, he acquired popularity by his generosity to the many poor, and his implacable animosity to the few rich. The country rang with tales of his patronage of the weak; and the peasantry, never disposed to be enemies of the men of the mountains, were on excellent terms with the brigands.

The old order of things which Manhès had torn down with bloody hands was rapidly rebuilt; and the Vardarelli were brigands of the happy times of the Spanish viceroys. There were chivalrous traits in the character of the leader, touches

of generosity and tenderness, which are the more conspicuous from their shining out of the murky dullness and brutality of Bourbon history. It is unfortunate for society that a brigand should seem more honourable and chivalrous than a king. But it was not the fault of the Vardarelli that prince and robber changed places, nor is it mine that I confess it. Perhaps the good fame of the Vardarelli was partly due to their connection with the secret order of the Carbonari. It is said that the chief boasted of this connection, and historians are disposed to admit its probability. On the other hand, the Carbonari have never used brigandage to further their schemes in South Italy. A movement initiated by them in the last year of Murat changed all the authorities in the province of Teramo (except in Teramo itself), and affected seriously all the provinces. In fact, this movement more nearly resembled a revolution than any of Ferdinand's bloody reactions, but it cost scarcely a drop of blood, except that shed by Murat in punishing its authors.

The Vardarelli made their marches and battles upon horseback, riding the small but hardy horses

of their mountains. They repeatedly encountered and defeated the royal militia. They moved from one valley to another with such celerity that they seemed endowed with ubiquity; and their assaults upon the troops were so sudden and terrible, that they seldom failed to punish their adversaries severely.

Ferdinand sent the militia in chase of these mountaineers without success. He resolved to employ the regular Neapolitan and Austrian troops. Indeed, so little confidence had this sovereign in the loyalty of his people and army, that the departure of the German troops was delayed because forty or fifty brigands were riding the country at pleasure.

General Leporano, commandant of the province, one day invited some military friends to join him in a boar hunt. Among the party was a certain Major Alponte, belonging to the garrison of Bari. The hunt was proceeding with great enthusiasm. The officers, well mounted, and armed with lances, were in the full enjoyment of a successful chase, when some of the attendants shouted, "The Vardarelli! The Vardarelli!"

The hunters had no alternative but to put spurs to their horses and gallop for life, or at least for honour. The horse of Major Alponte stumbled upon the fallen trunk of a tree, and the major took earth ten paces away, with all breath and sense knocked out of him.

When he came to himself he was in the hands of the Vardarelli. The Chief treated the officer kindly; but gave him to understand that his release could be effected only by a negotiation on the part of the king, and the payment of a thousand ducats as ransom.

Ferdinand was obliged to treat with the brigands as a power, and to pay the thousand ducats.

On one occasion, a battalion was sent from Naples to assist in the capture of the Vardarelli. The officer in command was foolish enough to boast that he would march Gaetano Vardarelli and his scoundrels through the Toledo with their hands tied behind their backs. Brigands find out nearly everything that happens in the capital, and Vardarelli heard of this bombast. He resolved to teach the young man a lesson. He put himself in the way of the troops, and then withdrew until

he had led the battalion into a narrow defile, with high rocks frowning on either side. The soldiers rushed along in eager pursuit of their supposed prey; but suddenly the path ceased, and the rocks frowned in their faces. They were in Vardarelli's trap. He now sprung it. Suddenly a loud voice cried, "Lay down your arms, or you are dead men!"

The soldiers raised their eyes, and saw the band posted out of the reach of attack, with their guns cocked and levelled to fire.

The cup was bitter, but young Bombastes had to drain it to the dregs. The soldiers stacked their arms in the place designated by Vardarelli. Then the chief descended with part of his men, and contemplated the humbled officer with a look of satisfaction, not unmingled with patronizing pity. The brigands were ordered to wet the guns of the soldiers, without availing themselves of the waters of the showers, the springs, or the sea, while the chief rendered the same service to the sword-belt of the commandant.

When the guns of the soldiers had been rendered harmless by this process, Vardarelli ordered

the soldiers to retake their arms, and having put them through their military evolutions, and stationed them with their faces towards Naples, he returned the young officer his sword, saying, "I have a bit of advice to give you. For the future, be less boastful in the city and more cautious in the country." One cannot help thinking that, if it were necessary to choose to act one or the other part of this ridiculous piece of comedy, the part of the brigands must be preferred.

Such exploits as these, and more serious ones, combined with the anxious desire of Ferdinand to send home the Austrian army, led the King—to exterminate the band? Nothing of the sort, gentle reader. It led the "King of the Two Sicilies" to make a treaty of alliance with the Vardarelli.

The treaty, after the ordinary preface, "In the name of the Most Holy Trinity," proceeds to enumerate the following Articles:—

"Art. I.—To the Vardarelli and their followers shall be conceded pardon and oblivion of all their offences.

"Art. II.—The band shall be changed into a company, bearing arms in the Royal service.

"Art. III.—The pay of the chief, Gaetano Vardarelli, shall be ninety ducats a month (the pay of a colonel). The pay of each of the three subaltern chiefs shall be forty-five ducats a month (pay of a captain). The pay of each of the privates shall be thirty ducats a month (pay of a lieutenant).

"Art. IV.—The said company shall take, at the hands of the royal commissioner, an oath of fidelity to the King and of obedience to his generals in the provinces, and shall be assigned to the service of *pursuing public criminals in any part of the kingdom.*"

The Vardarelli were by this means transformed into a fine pack of human bloodhounds, and were expected to exterminate all other brigands. And they did it.

Colletta says, "The Vardarelli swore this compact, and kept their oath. They destroyed the highway robbers who were scourging the Capitanata."*

* "Storia," b. vii. c. xxix.

As for Ferdinand, he kept this treaty as well as he kept any other with his subjects. Having extinguished brigandage in the Capitanata, Vardarelli asked from the Government its further orders. But all the other brigands having been destroyed, the King was, of course, anxious to finish the matter by destroying these. As a means of furthering this design, a message was sent to the Vardarelli that the general in command wished to review them.

Gaetano was as astute as Ferdinand, and penetrated the design. He therefore responded, that he would be glad to have his company reviewed, provided it took place in the open country, not in the city.

Foiled in this attempt at treachery, the Government invented another which was more successful. Twenty assassins were employed for this purpose. The Bourbons, with a sense of poetic justice, employed dirty hands for dirty work.

The village of Ururi was inhabited by relations and friends of the Vardarelli; and, on this account, the Vardarelli entered it with a sense of security. This confidence was their ruin. The band were

one day sleeping on the public square of this village, with their sentinels posted at the corners of the streets. At a given signal, twenty windows looking on the square flew open, and as many muskets were fired at the sleepers. Gaetano, his two brothers and six others were killed by the discharge. The assassins had taken aim at the chiefs. The rest of the band, appalled by this successful treachery, fled to the woods.

One of these assassins, named Porto-Cannone, described as a brutal wretch, had nevertheless a just ground of enmity against Gaetano Vardarelli. The brigand leader had committed a violence upon the modesty of a young sister of Porto Cannone. The assassin rushed from the house where he had fired the fatal shot at Gaetano, ran to the scarcely lifeless body, and tearing open the bullet-wound with his knife, thrust his hands into the warm breast. Then he besmeared his face with the blood, as if washing away a stain. Turning to the people collecting around the corpses, he said, pointing to his bloody face—

"*I have washed out the stain.*"

The surviving Vardarelli complained of the

violation of the treaty. The Government promised to punish the murderers of their brethren. Accordingly, some of this new set of scoundrels were arrested, and put on trial.

There remained forty-eight Vardarelli, but the chiefs were dead. The band was disorganized and appalled at its sudden calamity. The Government renewed the negotiations. The brigands were requested to nominate new chiefs. The chiefs were elected. Then General Amato, to whom the Government had entrusted this business, informed the new leaders that it was necessary for them to take the oath of loyalty, and for this purpose ordered them to repair to Foggia. Nine out of the forty-eight refused to obey this order, and endeavoured to dissuade the rest from going; but thirty-nine kept the appointment of General Amato.

It was known that the band was that day to be reviewed, and Foggia kept holiday. The streets were thronged with people who had come from the neighbouring villages to witness the spectacle.

About eleven A.M., they defiled upon the public

square, crying "*Viva il Re!*" At the appearance of General Amato upon a balcony overlooking the square, they dismounted from their horses and stood by them, holding the bridles in their hands. The general smiled graciously upon them. Colonel Sivo reviewed them, complimented them upon their fine manner, talked familiarly with them, now praising the noble look of a man, now the fine figure of a horse, writing notes upon rewards to be given to this or that one for previous exploits—with all these little arts passing away time until the militia could arrive.

The troops arrived, and, unobserved, took up their positions at the corners of the streets. At a signal from General Amato, Colonel Sivo retired, the general waved his cap, and the soldiers fired upon the band. At the first fire, nine of the Vardarelli fell. Ten mounted their horses, dashed through the soldiers, and escaped. Twenty left their horses and fled into an old abandoned house near the square.

After considerable hesitation, the soldiers, who respected the valour of the Vardarelli, ven-

tured to approach the house. Finding it silent, and apparently tenantless, they entered. An hour of search did not detect a trace of the twenty brigands. At length a soldier opened a trap-door leading into a cellar, and peered down into the darkness. A shot fired from below killed him, and disclosed the hiding-place of the Vardarelli. The soldiers brought straw and resinous wood, set them on fire, and for an hour poured a river of fire down into the cellar. During all this time there were heard two shots; but not a lament or a groan reached the ears of those above. The shots were fired by two brothers, who, seeing escape hopeless, embraced and then killed each other. Another, equally desperate, threw himself into the flames and perished. Seventeen surrendered. It is not surprising that General Pepe writes:—

"My first impulse on reading of these proceedings was to tear off my uniform and throw it out of the window."

The Government put these seventeen upon trial in May, 1818, on the singular charge that they had not been faithful to the treaty of the 6th

of July. They were all condemned and executed in one day. Those who had escaped were captured by various artifices, and, with one exception, all were executed. The exception is a marvel. He bore the name D'Alessandro. The provincial governor, De Mattei, took him under his protection, and made him royal district attorney! The paths to eminence under the Bourbons were not many, but brigandage was certainly one of them, and perhaps little more perilous than the rest.

Having disposed of fifty Vardarelli, Ferdinand felt himself able to govern the kingdom without foreign aid, and on the 17th of August the twelve thousand Austrian troops departed.

The assassins of Ururi were released without punishment, and even rewarded for this service to the Government. The Vardarelli left behind them the odour of heroism and martyrdom. This is not the only passage in the history of the nineteenth century, where public crime seems absolutely honourable and magnanimous, when contrasted with the weakness, littleness, stupidity and treachery of a king.

During the three years 1816-19, the road from Foggia to Naples was infested by a brigand named Beppo di Furia. This Beppo was remarkably fortunate in his alliances, which included a community of certain interests with the provincial governor of Foggia. It was on this wise. Four times a year the governor had to send to Naples the quarterly returns of the various government revenues from his province. The treaty consisted of two conditions:—

1. The Governor, party of the first part, was bound to inform Beppo when he might look for the diligence in which the remittances for the Government were sent.

2. Beppo, party of the second part, was to rob the diligence, and content himself with what money the box contained.

The Governor put about five-sixths of the revenues into his pocket, and poor Beppo, who did all the work and took all the odium of the crime, received but one-sixth.

After three years of this partnership, the brigand, carelessly, or good-naturedly, permitted

himself to be taken, and being put on trial, he was condemned to be executed. On his way to the scaffold, Beppo, who had probably been soured by the greediness of the governor, disclosed the whole affair. The officer in charge delayed the execution until the King could be informed of the strange confession. The King heard the story, and wrote to the sheriff, "*Have Beppo di Furia hung.*" He was hung accordingly. Nor is this all. The Governor had heard of the confession with a terrible fright. Eight days afterwards, he received a letter sealed with the arms of Ferdinand, and fainted before he could open it. When he came to himself, his wife with a radiant countenance informed him that the King had been graciously pleased to make him Minister of the Interior. Foggia, with scarcely twenty thousand inhabitants, was evidently too narrow a field for the talents of the Governor.

In November, 1818, General Guglielmo Pepe was appointed to succeed General Amato in the department of Foggia and Avellino. He has written an account of his measures, his

motives, and his success; the latter tinged with a little *couleur de rose*.*

In the first place, let us look at the situation. The surviving friends of the Vardarelli were in arms, scouring the Molise and the Capitanata in every direction. In the territory embraced in Pepe's command, more than two thousand orders for arrests remained unexecuted. So many bandits infested the highways, that it was necessary to keep at least a thousand soldiers to guard the diligence which went twice a week from Apulia to Naples. This, mark you, was only for the diligence. As for other travellers, they were brave men who undertook the journey. "In going to Naples, the inhabitants of Apulia had to pass through the valley of Bovino. Here they were often assailed, robbed and compelled to pay ransoms. On my arrival there, I found many brick columns, on which were displayed the heads of the brigands who had been executed."

The mantle of Gaetano Vardarelli had fallen

* See "Memorie del Gen. Guglielmo Pepe," vol. i., chap. xxiv.

upon a certain Minotti, who enrolled a band of mounted men, and scoured the same region. He collected from the proprietors money, clothing, tobacco, and such other luxuries as he coveted. In other provinces the state of things was not much better. The kingdom was at peace; but the highway from Capua to Terracina was covered with pickets of soldiers.

The flocks and herds of the Abruzzi were usually driven into the Capitanata for the winter. The shepherds, who in these migrations and winter encampments were necessarily in the power of the brigands, consulted their safety and interest by keeping on friendly terms with the sovereigns of the campagna.

This is a very brief statement of the situation.

Now look at the powers of a lieutenant-general, in time of peace, under the Bourbons.

"Generals commanding the military divisions had a right to imprison all persons of every condition and class, declaring them suspected of secret intercourse with the brigands; they could bring such persons before a military commission, and if the sentence was death, it was imme-

diately executed without the revision of any superior tribunal or power. The proprietors were exposed to being brought before these commissions for obeying the orders of the bandits—orders which were given with a threat of burning their houses and killing their cattle."

As to the method which had been pursued by his predecessors, we know already how General Amato served the king. Pepe adds a little to our information:—

"I found in the archives of my command a document, from which it appeared that two thousand ducats had been spent to buy poisons, and to pay the poisoners of brigands, though no brigand was ever poisoned. Indulgence was promised to those brigands who should kill their accomplices. The law was so arbitrary, and the administration so reckless, that it was difficult to tell which were the more dangerous, the bandits, or the officials who used means at once iniquitous and fruitless."

In his first order of the day, Pepe declared that those proprietors who should yield to the demands of the brigands to save their property

from being burned should not be liable to arrest. He then tried to organize an efficient militia for the public service, and to stimulate a sentiment of patriotism and the love of order among the people. He found no disposition in the people to coöperate with the Government. Between Ferdinand and Minotti there was little to choose; rather, the balance fell in favour of the brigands. Finding an enrolment in the name of the King difficult, if not impossible, Pepe enrolled his militia in the name of the Carbonari! He boasts that in this way he got ten thousand militia, and exterminated brigandage. Both statements are exaggerated.

This organization of Carbonari into serviceable militia did not please the Government. Hearing that Pepe had reviewed two thousand of them in Foggia, the ministry sent him a private circular, in which he was informed that "hereafter he must not assemble more than two companies of militia at the same time." "I comprehended," writes Pepe, "that the militia was an object of suspicion to the Government, who regarded it as a dagger with two edges."

Nor was it that these men were Carbonari. This circumstance was unknown to the Government. Pepe was rendering the militia respectable. The Bourbons constantly dishonoured and degraded their military service by recruiting it from the prisons and brigands, and never tolerated an efficient militia.

The efforts of Pepe were attended with considerable success. His Carbonari militia rendered such effective service, that the brigands found it convenient to carry on their trade in other provinces; and, if he has not exaggerated the facts, his district was soon transformed into a peaceful, law-abiding community, encircled with dark and bloody grounds on which the old system continued to defy the Government. Pepe found what every other general of spirit has proved, that when a sense of security is given to these populations by a vigorous and just administration, they coöperate heartily in the war upon brigandage.

"The militia began to acquire faith in their own strength, and the proprietors, seeing a stable protection afforded to them, no longer gave

arms, clothing, or money to the bands of plunderers, but, instead, received them with their muskets. All the orders for arrests were executed, and the *certainty that the smallest offences against law would be punished, put a stop to the commission of crime.* The only fugitives from justice not taken and executed were some who fled into the neighbouring province of Molise, which was not under my command. But these persons, being for the most part natives of the Capitanata—a province much more wealthy and populous than the Molise—for a time kept up incessant raids into my district. Therefore it was necessary to take them upon the wing—not an easy thing to do, since they rode on horseback, and were extremely wary." *

Having secured his militia, Pepe proclaimed death to all brigands, overthrowing totally the system of pardons, poisons and bribes, which had for a century constituted the Bourbon system of treating this social disease.

The fierce Minotti made an incursion into the Capitanata. He fought and conquered the

* Vol. i. p. 349.

militia in San Nicandro, and rode boldly into the plains of Foggia. Major Basile was sent against him with a small company, which he was obliged to divide, in order to cover the several lines of retreat open to the bandit.

In the neighbourhood of Troia, Basile, with only twenty-four mounted men, encountered Minotti. The bandit ordered a retreat; but a peasant woman said to him, disdainfully—

"The enemy are no stronger than you, and in place of fighting them you flee!"

The taunt is characteristic of the people. Minotti changed his plan, and prepared to fight. Basile charged heroically upon the bandits, who were sheltered by a farm-house surrounded by a wall and ditch. The charge was fruitless. The Major ordered a retreat, but valorously brought up the rear. His horse reared and threw him to the ground. The brigands rushed upon him and made him prisoner. Minotti wished to spare his life, keeping him as a hostage; but one of his men—"a boy scarcely eighteen years of age, who took pleasure in assassination, and, young as he was, had already committed several

homicides" — discharged his musket at poor Basile, and stretched him lifeless upon the ground.

Basile had died in honourable service, but though Pepe recommended a recognition of his services by the king, and especially commended three sisters left without a protector by his death, Ferdinand—a few years before, so profuse in his favours to brigands—paid no attention to the matter.

Minotti continued to ride up and down the kingdom, ruling like an emperor, for some time. Finally, he encountered near Troia, the same company he had beaten when it was under the command of Basilo. The soldiers were this time more fortunate. They killed or captured the whole band. The prisoners were summarily shot. Pepe says, "Before proceeding to this painful, but necessary act of justice, I took pains to see that the names of these prisoners were upon the list of the bandits."

Pepe hastened to report that the bandits of his province were entirely destroyed, and that it was safe to travel throughout his command without

a military escort. He had scarcely sent off his dispatch, when news arrived that a new armed band had made its appearance in the province of Avellino. It was a great satisfaction for him to learn that the band had been formed in the region of Benevento, outside of his military command. It was a still greater pleasure to learn, that his citizen soldiers, without awaiting his orders, had collected under the command of their citizen captains, attacked and routed the band, killing eleven brigands in the fight. The heroes of this battle loaded the dead bodies upon some carts, and proudly escorted them to the nearest military station for identification.

While General Pepe was repressing brigandage in the Basilicata, General Church, an Englishman in the Neapolitan service, was sent into the Terra d'Otranto with a similar mission. In this province the disorders were connected with some secret political societies, offshoots or secessions from the Carbonari, of a very vindictive and bloody character. If we may trust the few and brief accounts which have come down to us, these societies, under the guise of republican aspira-

tions, reduced assassination to a system. From them, rather than the true Carbonari, originated, that theory of the dagger which is carelessly or maliciously attributed to all Italian republicans.

These Decisi (decided) and Indipendenti were little more than clubs of reckless adventurers, who, under the cloak of political sentiments common to most Neapolitans at that time, aimed to promote individual interests and satisfy private revenge. Of course, the gilded promises of the secret societies attracted many innocent persons within their pale, and a wild enthusiasm led many into deeper guilt.

The leader of this movement in the Terra d'Otranto was the Priest Don Ciro Anicchiarico. His career is the usual story with some interesting variations.

He was born at Grottaglie, educated for the priesthood, ordained by the bishop of that diocese, and received the mass. He seems to have possessed great talents and strong passions; the latter determined the bent of the former. He fell passionately in love with a lady in his native town, but the favours of the mistress of his affec-

tions fell on one of his schoolfellows. This was a betrayal. He hastened to take vengeance. Having concealed himself behind a wall with a loaded gun, he shot his rival, who was walking past it without suspicion of the hostility of his friend.

He seems to have escaped punishment for this crime; but he had resolved to extirpate the whole race of his victim. One after another, every member of the family, except one, disappeared. This one remained shut up in his house for fifteen years, until General Church finished the career of Don Ciro.

Finding that all these assassinations were likely to attract the tardy eyes of Neapolitan justice, Don Ciro left his native town. The Government had a short method of managing such cases. Finding that Don Ciro was missing, and little caring so it got its pound of flesh, it locked up in prison an innocent brother of the assassin. Don Ciro gave himself up to save his family, and was sentenced to fifteen years of hard labour.* In this man, with half a dozen homicides

* The arrest of the friends of brigands has been common to all governments in these provinces. This is one reason why

upon his conscience, the love of kindred was stronger than the love of life. It is a striking feature of the Neapolitan character that the social affections survive in the midst of the most criminal practices and the basest vices.

Everything was slow in Naples. Four years passed, and Don Ciro was still in a dungeon petitioning to be sent to the penal works. Finding his prayers neglected, he concluded to leave prison, and one fine morning he was missing. He came out in good time. Ferdinand was in Sicily, the French in Naples. Brigandage was the most honourable and saintly work of the hour. Don Ciro joined a band and distinguished himself as a splendid shot, a hardy mountaineer, and a reckless assassin. Tales which chill the blood are told of his atrocity; such as violating women and then murdering them; firing a house and taking care to consume its inmates in the

whole families are found enrolled in the same company. When one becomes a criminal the rest are all in jeopardy. The root of the matter is deeper still. The private vengeance which alone moved the slow feet of justice, took its revenge on the friends of an assassin if the law failed to do so, or even before the public administration could intervene.

flames, because one of them, a woman, had refused his dishonourable offers.

In 1818, this incarnate devil was still abroad. He had managed to elude the pursuit of many officers, and at this period had contrived to create the impression that he was at the head of a formidable secret organization (the Decisi). The facts do not justify the belief that the sect numbered more than a few hundred reckless adventurers and brigands.

In the midst of his outrageous life, Don Ciro maintained his priestly character, and often celebrated mass in the woods; doubtless to gratify and encourage the superstition of his followers. He declared that the whole clergy were corrupt, made up of rogues without faith.

As an illustration of Bourbon policy it may be said here, that when some gentlemen of the province met one day to devise means to repress and destroy this band, the Government, alarmed at a public meeting, forbade a repetition of the offence.

In 1818, General Church, at the head of some twelve hundred foreign troops, made his disposi-

tions for enclosing and capturing Don Ciro. The general secured the co-operation of the people. Don Ciro, who had reigned as a devil over the peasantry, lost prestige, and finally undertook to escape by sea. He failed in this, was driven from place to place, made a hundred hairbreadth escapes, and lost all but three of his followers.

At this point General Church lost all trace of him. Believing him to be in the vicinity of Francavilla, his own head quarters, and concealed by some of his friends, the general issued stringent orders to the local militia, and threatened the town of San Mazara (whose inhabitants he particularly suspected of collusion with the brigands), with utter destruction if the robber-priest were not found in eight days.

Satisfied that General Church was in earnest, the people very readily found the hiding-place of Don Ciro. He had shut himself up in the farm-house of Scaserba, about ten miles from Francavilla.

In this farm-house he was besieged by 130 of General Church's soldiers, and a large number of militia. These fortified farm-houses are well

adapted to defence. They consist of a square space enclosed with a wall against which the buildings are erected. In the centre of the space, rises a tower entirely separated from the rest of the buildings.

In the top of this tower, Don Ciro and his three men maintained a siege for nearly three days. A four-pounder cannon was brought up and knocked off the roof of the tower, but the intrepid brigand maintained himself in the second story. A barrel of oil was rolled to the gate, and set on fire. The man who fired it was shot through the heart by the unerring rifle of Don Ciro. The brigand had neglected to provide himself with a supply of water, and a burning thirst began to consume him. Knowing that sooner or later he must be captured, he resolved to make a virtue of necessity, and surrendered. The soldiers counted the little garrison with infinite disgust. They had lost twenty men (six killed and fourteen wounded) at the hands of only four assassins.

This monster, Don Ciro, and his companions were shot a few days after their capture. The

fall of the chief, and the vigour of the General, led to the repression of brigandage in that province. Colletta tells us that General Church executed a hundred and sixty-three persons during this campaign.

The horrid practice of suspending the bloody heads of executed brigands in public places, particularly near the scenes of their crimes, and under church towers, prevailed at this period throughout the provinces. General Pepe had forbidden the practice in his command, but elsewhere it remained in full force. The traveller in those days was often troubled with misgivings as to the soundness of his own mind, and the identity of the land he had come to visit. Was this indeed Italy, with the passes of its mountains, and the belfries of its churches decorated with ghastly heads as an Indian's wigwam is adorned with scalps? Surely it must be some horrid dream, or some wandering of the intellect in the tourist himself!

In April, 1819, the Neapolitan government issued the following consoling circular—

"The reign of the assassins being at an end,

and all the provinces tranquillized, it is resolved, in order to extinguish their memory, that the heads of the malefactors, executed in pursuance of the sentences of the military commissions, and which are exposed under the church towers, and other parts of the towns, shall be taken down and interred, and that the places where they were exposed shall be entirely cleaned and white-washed. This letter shall be read by the arch-priests in all the churches."

In the same year the government made a treaty with Portugal for the transportation of its convicts to Rio Janeiro. The condemned had multiplied so as to overflow its prisons and convict islands. There was no need of a Sanfedist army to liberate Rome. What else could be done? The public were disgusted at the transaction, but the government boasted of its shrewd bargain, and even of its humanity.

The kingdom was on the eve of a new revolution, led by the Carbonari. Whatever may be thought of the character of this secret political society, it is impossible to read the Neapolitan

historians of the time without admiring its moderation and justice. The reformers demanded only a constitution; and they maintained order while they struggled to establish it upon some sure foundation. Colletta, who did not sympathize with the sect, cannot be suspected of any partiality when he says that the Carbonari in Calabria opened the prisons only to liberate the political prisoners, and refused liberty to those who were confined for common crimes. The Carbonari revolution probably went further than the peaceful times of Ferdinand's long reign to extinguish brigandage. Ferdinand fled for the third time from his faithful people. Sicily was shut up to him by the revolution, and he repaired to Germany, to return under the protection of Austrian bayonets.

Naples fell into the dead calm of despotism, enlivened only by the audacity of that brigandage which Ferdinand bequeathed to his successors, as they in their turn have bequeathed it to the kingdom of Italy.

After a reign of fifty-five years, the first Ferdinand was gathered to his fathers, in January,

1825. The short reign of Francis I. was distinguished by nothing but the fact that two servants of the King's household, Carlomagno Viglia and Caterina Desimone, sold all the offices, civil and military, for hard cash. Their business even included the Ministry of Finance. With this variation, the five years of Francis' reign do not differ from that of his predecessor. Three fruitless revolutions, under Ferdinand had discouraged the good; sixty years of moral debauchery had multiplied and emboldened the bad. Society was definitively organized on the principles of brigandage.

Ferdinand II. came to the throne in 1830, and spent thirty years in perfecting the system of his two predecessors.

He suppressed a revolution in 1848, on the most artistic principles. He professed to yield to its demands, decoyed his people into an open declaration of their wishes, gave a constitution, and swore to maintain it, with the most perfect complacency. When he had, through his secret agents and spies, obtained perfect lists of those who were sincerely liberal, he sprung his trap

upon them all, and devoted ten years to vengeance, repression, and corruption.

Brigandage became the business of half his people. They travelled less in bands, did not hide in the mountains, nor sack villages, but they robbed with complacency and *ad libitum*. In the cities, the Camorra robbed under the approving eyes of Ferdinand's *political* police. In the country, the mountaineers and *canaille* pursued the same calling when it suited their convenience; only the forming of large bands was not considered the correct thing. A certain Talarico was guilty of this indiscretion. He was not able to restrain his genius within the bounds set by the will of his sovereign; and, having collected a formidable band, spread desolation over a wide extent of country. Ferdinand could not tolerate this state of things. The success of Talarico was a bad example; the people clamoured for the right to use gunpowder against the brigands, and putting gunpowder into the hands of the people involved the risk of its being exploded under the throne.

The band must be suppressed. Negotia-

tions were opened with Talarico. The diplomatic correspondence has not been preserved, but the result of the conferences between the two powers is history. Talarico and his men were assigned a residence in the beautiful island of Ischia, with comfortable pensions from the King. The pension roll of the Bomba höuse transmitted to Victor Emanuel contained their beatified and honoured names.

After 1848, when the middle class forced Ferdinand II. to give a constitution, which he disposed of afterwards on the Bourbon system of perjury, the whole force of all other classes of society was turned against this class. The *bourgeois*, the *galantuomini*—in other words, every man who ate honestly, earned white bread, and wore an honestly bought coat—were made the victims of police-inspectors, of the ignorant masses, and even of the brigands. There were two neat maxims on which this was founded. The *bourgeois* have something: the *bourgeois* cannot protect what they have.

The King had set the example of unblushing perjury for the nation. He knew who wanted

rights, free schools, newspapers, and personal safety. It was the middle class who lived without security and without hope under a system of arbitrary government. The ignorant masses had no advantage to gain in a revolution, except a few hours of high festival and sack. The Government gave them this by the year, and they were content. The robberies perpetrated without attempt at concealment, the mild brigandage which looks only to the distribution of property by the force of the strongest, and the free rein given to private revenge, which implies in this country assassinations—these things have not been written, cannot be written.

In the archives of all the governors of provinces there were long lists of the *attendibili* (people to be watched). These lists were part of the *vade-mecum* of every police inspector and governor. The *attendibili* were divided into three classes—the simple, the dangerous, and the very dangerous. All these persons were confined in their native communes, under the supervision of the police. On no pretext could they leave their semi-prisons. An old canon, seventy-five years

of age, was refused permission, in 1859, to visit Naples. The reader could not guess the reason. He was in the list of the *attendibili* because, in 1848, he, poor, innocent soul, thought the King was sincere, and he was so simple as to preach a sermon in honour of *Ferdinand II., the giver of the constitution.*

In these lists the names of honest and laborious artisans often figured. They were commended to the watchful eyes of the police, lest, becoming comfortable and prosperous, they should look about them on the misery of their fellows, and be tempted to throw themselves into politics. At Naples, politics was a synonym for the seven deadly sins.

Those who were not on these lists of *attendibili*—and they were not many—enjoyed little more liberty. If one of them wished to leave his province, three formalities were necessary.

1st. The consent of his wife properly certified to the governor.

2nd. A certificate of his parish priest.

3rd. The permission of the governor.

If one wished to keep his name off the fatal

list, he must be very circumspect. If he failed to be at mass twice in succession, or to communicate every month; if he was present at a procession without a candle, or if he failed to illuminate his house at every festival of the court, woe to him! His name went on the black list, and, suspected once, he was suspected ever after.

It is hardly necessary to say that newspapers were not encouraged. An official journal was published, for the benefit of the ministers, the higher class of *employés*, and for circulation in lands so benighted as to tolerate a free press. But in Naples not even the *cafés* were allowed to subscribe to the official organ. "It is not necessary," said Ferdinand, "that my subjects know what happens in other States." Certainly it was not convenient.

The results of this system will never be fully described. The honest part of the population were all prisoners of State, suspected of high treason. If they opened their lips there was danger of an indiscreet word which would condemn them.

The people learned silence and apparent in-

difference to political questions. A few conspired, or were suspected of conspiring, and spent their lives in prison. A thousand striking instances of the effects of this espionage upon the people might be told.

One of my friends, an Italian, who was several years in a diplomatic position in the United States, relates this:—A young man, who had studied medicine in Naples, emigrated to New York to escape from the terrible moral pressure of that infernal atmosphere. But even in New York he did not dare to speak freely of what he had seen in Naples. He said one day, "Forgive me, my friends, but I suffered so severely in Naples, that I have lost all moral courage. If I had uttered the word 'Italy' to my own brother, in the secrecy of our chamber, I should have been in peril. Even the walls of Naples have ears."

In 1862 I conversed with an Englishman, long resident in Naples. I introduced the political question. He replied as by habit, "This is a good country to live in, if you do not meddle with politics;" but, instantly remembering, added, "I beg your pardon, I had forgotten." Two years

of free government had not shaken off the old habit of reticence and cowardice.

These were the afflictions of honest men. In the succeeding chapters I shall try to describe how rogues flourished.

We have found brigandage under all governments in these provinces, and have an historical answer to the question, Why does brigandage exist in South Italy? I shall now pause in the history to enumerate the natural, moral and political causes which have contributed to produce the brigandage of our day.

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL CONDITIONS — TRADITIONAL CHARACTER OF THE BRIGANDS.

Mountainous nature of the country—Want of highways—Majority of the communes without roads—The constant civil agitations of these provinces unfavourable to national progress—The isolation of the people nourished brigandage—Anecdote—Why ransoms are paid with little parley—Mutilating captives to enforce payment of ransoms—Anecdote—Character of the Papal frontier—Desolateness of great part of it—Traditional danger of the mountain road from Capua to Rome—Labourers on the Agro Romano—How they were made brigands—The entire history of this people a preparation for brigandage—The law of force the only valid code—Feudal bravos — The peasant's only path to fame—The sbanditi of feudalism—Brigandage a protest of poverty against injustice—No dishonour attached to it because courted, pardoned, used by authority—Impossible to dishonour the brigand in the eyes of the masses—The glorification of crime completed by the supposed sanction of religion—The Cantastoria of the Old Mole—One of his brigand stories—The heroic life of Agostino Avossa—Lazzarone opinion of *tradimento and vendetta*—Anecdote.

THE NATURE OF THE COUNTRY.

BRIGANDAGE has from the earliest times found an encouragement and support in the mountainous nature of the country. There have always existed fastnesses in which the brigand could store his supplies, whither he could retreat when pursued. To these retreats there were no paths on which even a mule could climb; and at every turn of the faint foot-paths an advancing file of soldiers was in danger of being annihilated by the concealed foe. The mountain ridges are the natural base of the bandit, and the system has never flourished in the open plain. Whenever, in moments of audacity, the lawless bands of marauders have taken possession of villages, and undertaken to hold a visible and tangible region, they have been swept away by the soldiers of Order. Their mountain dens above the clouds are involved in shadow and uncertainty. Out of these mysterious homes the brigands sally by night, kill, plunder, ravage, and return under cover of the darkness, laden with booty and prisoners, to invisible and inaccessible coverts.

It is at first view remarkable that after three thousand years of European civilization the light of day has not yet been admitted into regions within a hundred miles of the most famous and oldest cities of Europe. We can scarcely contain our surprise when we read in grave official documents that in the branches of the southern Appennines there are dens and caves situated in regions which would seem to be as wild and untraversed by highways as the remotest gulches of the Nevada or Utah Mountains.

The Basilicata is a region three-fourths as large as Tuscany. It is almost totally unprovided with roads. In it you may travel for ten, fifteen, and even twenty miles without encountering a village. Draw a line across the region east and west through Potenza, and the whole northern portion has only the short piece of highway which terminates at Melfi. Ninety-one out of its one hundred and twenty-four communes are without roads.

In several other districts the want of roads is equally striking. In Catanzaro, 92 out of 108; in Teramo 60 out of 75 communes, have no high-

ways. In the province of Naples itself, 24 communes are unprovided with roads. In the continental portion of the old kingdom of Naples, there are 1848 communes, of which 1321 are without roads for wheeled vehicles.

In the large districts of the Abruzzi, Calabria, Capitanata and Basilicata, embracing more than half of the continental territory ruled by the Bourbons, the present government found less than an average of one mile of highway to the area of a United States' township. There is a wide region dividing the Abruzzi from the Capitanata, across which there is no highway. Landed proprietors in the former have frequent occasion to visit the province of Foggia, but until the Italian government provided the railway from Ancona to Foggia, they were obliged to make a long detour by way of Naples.*

The wonder felt in reading such facts as these will be greatly lessened, if we remember the nature and aims of the successive governments. The Roman Empire was, in its internal administration, in many respects the model of that of the

* Massari Report, pp. 33, 34.

United States. It left the domestic institutions of its communities in the hands of the people themselves just as soon as the safety of its imperial control would permit. It constructed highways for the march of its legions, and to open to its luxurious patricians such resorts of pleasure as Baia and Naples. But within these principal lines, the people were left to themselves. The mountain region south of Rome, principally inhabited by shepherds, had no need of thoroughfares for wheeled carriages, and none were constructed.

Under the feudal system each baron found his safety in having the approaches to his castle and stronghold as inaccessible as possible. Feudalism incorporated itself with the successive governments between the Roman and that of the Neapolitan Bourbons; and we find both Charles and the first Ferdinand endeavouring to temper the power of their baronial lords. Indeed, the feudal system struck its root so deeply into this soil, has found so much nourishment in perpetual disorder, and has been so german to the spirit of the government, that it has not been entirely destroyed. Independent of the feudal instincts

of proprietors and governments, the continued civil disturbances, changes of government, and their attendant wars, gave little time for the development of the material interests of the country. The inaccessibility of half its territory was the strength of the Bourbon kingdom. It must be remembered, too, that the last hundred years, which have been so fruitful of material progress in all the rest of the civilized world, have been substantially lost to the Neapolitan people. In the immediate region of Naples, the Bourbon dynasty, impelled alike by necessity and pride, constructed some beautiful highways. The stranger who saw them drew a hasty argument in favour of that despotic power, which could so utilize and embellish its natural resources; but the centre of the kingdom, with its populations languishing in ignorance and poverty, and in want of the first instruments of prosperity, was never visited by the traveller.

The absence of roads in these regions nourished the materials of brigandage; the people were removed from the beneficent and softening influence of contact with their fellow-men. The

great commercial and social forces which tend to make mankind one, while they distribute intelligence, culture and order, did not act on these secluded peasants and shepherds. Traditional morality, law, and religion* held their ground, and brought the dark ages down into the heart of the most cultivated times.'" These men have thought, felt and believed as their ancestors of the fifteenth century, because no later century had visited their mountain homes.

Marc Monnier relates that, shortly before the revolution in 1860, a traveller resolved to ascend the Mattese. He took a guide, to whom he trusted himself entirely, and made a toilsome

* Homicide is always spoken of by these people as an accident. Some years after the destruction of the band of the Vardarelli, the author of "Lives of Banditti" had an interview with one of its ex-members, who had escaped the vengeance of the Government. He bore the modest name of Passo di Lupo (Wolf's step). McFarlane inquired the reason of his becoming a brigand. "Please, your excellency," said the fellow, "I was making love with a peasant girl, and had the misfortune to give a stab to one I thought my rival." The rival died, and the judicial authorities were so unreasonable as to *persecute* the victim of the accident! He fled to the Vardarelli. When our author knew him he was an honest fellow, rising in the good graces of his employer; yet his hands were stained with innumerable crimes.

ascent in the midst of a magnificent country. At two-thirds of the way up, he found a lake in the bosom of a savage valley whose rocky sides were clothed with a forest of firs and pines. From the summit of the mountain the prospect extended to the shores of the two seas. In the midst of this strange solitude they encountered a cross. The guide said—

"I myself erected this cross."

"For what purpose?" inquired the traveller.

"In fulfilment of a vow that I had made."

"Why did you make the vow?"

"I met with an accident here?"

"Indeed, of what nature?"

"I killed a man."

"*You?*"

"Yes, sir, there," and he pointed to the cross.

Upon various points of the mountain ridges *he had erected twenty-nine of these crosses.* The morality and religion of such a being belong to the darkest times.

This condition of the country gives to the

* "Brigandage," p. 9.

brigand powerful means of plying his trade in property and life. Whoever has a caprice or a necessity to travel through his dominions must pay tribute to him. The wife whose husband is carried away to these desolate valleys knows that no human power can deliver him, and that, if the required ransom is not paid, she may find his dead body at her door, or mourn for the rest of her life-time over his uncertain fate. All the tribunals of Europe would not suffice to pass judgment upon the crimes that have stained these heights. Read "Gil Blas" over again, changing names and countries, and you will have the history of these scenes and adventures. It is not strange that ransoms are paid with little parley; that often the brigand himself carries the letter of the prisoner, and gives emphasis to his demand by placing a portion of an ear of the mutilated captive in the hands of his wife or mother.*

* A band of brigands, having received as ransom money for a prisoner considerably less than they had demanded, said that it was not the price for a *whole man*, nor should a whole man be restored for it. With infernal barbarity they cut off their prisoner's nose and one of his hands.—McFarlane's *Banditti*, vol. i. p. 185.

Such cases have been frequent since 1860. In 1861, a man, whose friends were in Naples, was carried off in one of the provinces. The brigand sent a demand for one thousand ducats; the friends of the captive offered a third part of this sum. The messenger returned with one ear of the prisoner, and a threat that the other would be mutilated if a third summons became necessary. The friends paid all, and reduced themselves to beggary. The story was published in the principal journals of Naples.

With such secure retreats and the power of such terrible vengeance, one man terrifies a whole community. Domestic affections, as well as the love of property and peace, become the allies of brigandage: no one dares to denounce those who bear messages demanding ransoms. The unseen enemy may lay the informer under tribute, or even smite him in open day.

Marc Monnier says, "I have myself seen a man who had killed his employer; he walked tranquilly, with uplifted face, in the presence of

an entire village; the syndic did not dare to cause his arrest."*

The demoralization wrought by such fear on the one side, and terrible force on the other, can scarcely be fully described; all notion of law as a remedy for disorder, and a means of punishing crime, fell gradually, but certainly, before it. It reached the throne, and the Bourbon descended to compacts with the bands that infested his kingdom, and kept his word with them as faithfully as with any other portion of his subjects.

The want of roads in a wild mountain region is particularly remarkable on the Papal frontier, where the brigandage of the present time is most persistently active and demoralizing.

During the year 1861 there were many misunderstandings between the French and Italian troops growing out of the difficulty of determining the frontier. A portion of it ran through a region so rugged and impracticable that it had never been determined with entire accuracy where the two states joined each other.

From Civitaducale to Gaeta, if we except a

* "Brigandage," p. 10.

few tracts, the eye discerns nothing but volcanic wastes or mountains of hard rock. There are no where united one hundred acres of tillable land; no fruit trees, no vineyards, and, for a great part of the distance, neither trees nor shrubs. It is all a frightful waste, on which not enough grass grows to adapt it to pasturage.

The plains and low valleys of the South are beautiful, fertile, rich, beyond all description. On the contrary, these Appennines are barren, desolate, dry, forming a marked contrast to the green, shady, and picturesque Alps.*

This desolation is inhabited by a miserable population, part of whom have always been brigands. Whoever had to travel from Capua to Rome, over the mountain-road through San Germano, made the journey, according to the Italian proverb, "with the holy oil in his pocket."

Those mountaineers who are not brigands, have small distance to travel to become such. Tradition and their every-day life have accustomed them to look with complacency upon robbery and assassination, excused on the ground of

* Saint-Jorioz, "Brigantaggio," p. 330.

necessity, and held in no dishonour because never punished.

Many of these people are in the habit of going into the Pontifical States to labour during the summer, returning to their poor retreats to spend the winter in appalling wretchedness. When brigandage became honourable, from the sanction and patronage of an exiled king and a Pope in open hostility to United Italy, many of these poor labourers furnished convenient recruits for brigandage. They were accustomed to receive at the end of the summer an advance upon their earning for the next year. They depended upon this sum to carry them through the winter.

At the end of the summer of 1861, many of these wretched labourers were informed that they could not be paid the customary advance; favourable terms were offered them for enlisting in the bands, and they were threatened with imprisonment if they did not enlist. Some were proof against the temptation, and were actually put in durance by the Pontifical agents. Many entered the service of the "Church and King." They were promised six carlines—about two shillings—

per day while they remained in the Pontifical territory, and four carlines per day as soon as they had joined the *General* (Chiavone). The six carlines were paid while they remained in Rome, which was as short a time as possible. During the march to the frontier, the pay underwent a considerable reduction; and when they joined Chiavone, it ceased altogether. They were told—

"If you wish to eat, go over there," pointing across the frontier, "and help yourselves."*

The life which they led with Chiavone was most miserable. When not able to rob, they had a small amount of very black bread, and, being on the mountains, nothing but snow to satisfy their thirst. Most of them fled at the first opportunity; but it was fortunate if they felt able to go home without first robbing some traveller or proprietor, in order to get the means of sustaining life during the winter.

This phase of brigandage is well known. In one of the bands, consisting of two hundred and fifty men, two-thirds were labourers on the Agro Romano.

* Saint-Jorioz, "Brigantaggio," p. 332.

TRADITIONAL CHARACTER OF THE BRIGAND.

The entire history of this region has been a perpetual nourishment of brigandage. The law of force has been the only permanent and valid code for centuries. The feudal lord reigned, having absolute power over life and goods. To secure himself in his authority at home and to protect himself against his ambitious neighbours, he surrounded himself with braves. For admission nearest to his person, the unfailing patent and diploma was the having committed the most atrocious crimes. The ambition of the peasant had but one path upwards; he must arm himself, and win the approbation of his master by serving his lusts or his vengeance. Entering upon this path, he obtained manumission, and was enrolled in the most honourable service of his lord. Every change of feudal proprietors set free a greater or less number of men, to whom all peaceful pursuits were distasteful, and who offered their services to new masters, or, taking refuge in the castles which nature had built for them, began service on their own account. When the viceroy

of Phillip V. of Spain took charge of the government in 1501, the feudal lords had begun to decline in their absolute sway. The policy of the Aragonese dominion had set them at war with each other, and broken them against foreign enemies. The liberated brigand element assumed definitely the shape of brigandage under a title which indicates clearly both their origin and their character. They were called *Sbanditi*, being, in fact, the disbanded braves of declining feudalism.

These *Sbanditi* were, in their own estimate and that of their times, something quite different from our notion of the word outlaw. The court and service of the powerful barons was still open to them. The more terrible they had rendered themselves in the wood and on the mountain, the warmer was their reception in the hall and castle.

The reputation which such men bore among their ignorant fellows was so far from being dishonourable, that it had a certain lustre, as of men who by strength of hand had lifted themselves above the level on which they were born.

If the peasant, who is the inevitable recruit of

brigandage, were able to see higher than his feudal lord, he would learn the same lesson of the omnipotence of force to subject all rights, appropriate all virtues, and possess unlimited sway. The people were systematically educated in injustice. The civilizing tendencies of the age were arrested by feudalism, by perpetual war, by successful brigandage, and by the despotism of the government.

In the perpetual civil commotions, wars, and revolutions, brigandage has found freedom to work, pay for obedience or honourable employment. No stigma of criminality has been fastened upon it in the popular conscience. On the contrary, the aureola of patriotism, of legality, and, above all, of daring adventure, and dauntless bravery, has come to encircle and glorify it. Men stained with every crime, fresh from plunder and murder, have carried the standards of the Bourbons side by side with the soldiers of the most civilized nations; and titles and offices have been lavished upon them by grateful sovereigns.

There has been no steady and relentless persecution, no unbending and rigorous adminis-

tration, pursued patiently through years against them and their trade in disorder and anarchy.

If the misdeeds of the brigands disturb the consciences of the masses, this is immediately counteracted by deeds, committed by the representatives of Order and Law, of equal or greater guilt. There are long catalogues of wrongs done by magistrates, and unredressed by venal tribunals; of justice sold at a price; of fraud, rapine, and murder, on which the eye of public administration has looked with complacence. The deeds of the brigand himself have been pardoned, when his sword was needed in the royal or baronial service; or have been authorized when an enemy was to be attacked or an invader expelled.

This traditional character of the bandit transforms him into a hero. In the huts of peasants, fathers and mothers relate to their children the exploits of chiefs who fill a larger space in their wondering eyes than Alexander or Napoleon occupy in history. That undertone of jealousy which always runs through the character of the poor, and, in lands where property oppresses them, becomes a pronounced antipathy, makes

sacred the deeds of those who have assailed the rich, humbled the proud, and brought want to the doors of the luxurious. Nor are there wanting proofs of a generous and even sacred disposition of ill-gotten spoils. The brigand has lit up altars, decorated churches, and paid plentifully for masses in behalf of the dead. To the poor he has been more charitable than the religious orders.*

To invest such a man with the character of a criminal before the eyes of people who have only seen him in a glorified light—who know nothing of safe repose in the bosom of equal and just laws; who have smarted under the daily injustice of tyrannies which the bandit has defied—is a greater task than any other government was ever required to undertake. It is to break the spell of a tradition which has attracted to itself the generous sentiments and heroic impulses, and adjusted itself to the notions of right, justice and personal honour, of whole communities.†

* One of these bandits said on his trial, "I have done more for the poor than all the religious orders in the province." It is very easy to be liberal with other people's money, but the poor peasant is seldom a logician.

† At Orsara, a small village between Bovino and Troja, the usual amusement of the boys on a feast day is to divide

If anything were wanting to complete this glorification of crime, it is found in the alliance of religion itself with the brigand. He has been led by men clothed in its purple, he has been blessed by the ministers of its altars, and solemnly assured that the Head of the Church regarded him as a beloved and honoured servant.

The Old Mole of Naples used to be the rendezvous of the Lazzarone. The diversions which occupied them were various. Some slept in the sun, others made love, with the freedom of the African tribes. Here, a group busied itself with devotion under the direction of some travelling priest; there, Punchinello performed before a delighted crowd. But all eyes and ears were

themselves into two bands, one of which guards a little wooden cart, filled with rubbish, representing the *procaccio* (Government diligence, the richest prize of brigand adventure), while the other performs the more glorious part of the robber band which attacks it, and which, it is needless to add, always gains the victory. "Train up a child," etc.—*K. Kraven's Tour.*

In 1817, the body of a bandit, killed in a conflict with the troops, was exposed in the streets of Gallipoli. "I noticed that those who approached it, almost without exception, said, '*Poverello!*' (poor creature) and were much more touched with pity for his fate than shocked at his crimes."—*Lives of Banditti*, vol. i. p. 20.

attracted when the cantastoria arrived on the ground.

The cantastoria was a speciality of Naples. Elsewhere he attracted little or no attention; there, he was as popular as the stump orator in our rural districts. He recited by rote exciting passages from the poems of Ariosto, or bloody tales such as among us are to be read in tenth-rate novels. Of these latter performances the brigand was the inevitable hero. His exploits were greeted with cheers, and his reverses of fortune drew tears from all eyes. All this went on in open day, the Bourbon policeman being one of the delighted auditors. Why not? Some day he will be brigand himself.

Marc Monnier gives one of these stories, selected at random from the performances of the cantastoria of the Old Mole. It will give a better insight into the traditional glory of the bandit than whole chapters of dissertation. The poet begins in the style of the classic epics. He announces the subject of his song, and makes his invocation, not to the muse, but to our Lord Jesus Christ. Then comes the story.

He tells his auditors that Agostino Avossa was a Neapolitan, the son of a rich butcher. He had two dogs on whom his whole heart was set. A great gentleman, called Erario (the tax-collector is the devil of these tales), one day says to Avossa—

"My friend, give me one of your dogs for my chase."

Avossa refuses.

"This dog is the heart of my life. Take my blood if you wish, but this animal belongs to me."

Some days afterwards, the two dogs are shot, by order of the great gentleman.

This act of Erario is, in Neapolitan language, a *tradimento* (treachery), and demands *vendetta* (vengeance). Tradimento is a term used with great latitude by the lazzaroni, and is always infamous, vendetta always generous.

Avossa does not delay to take vengeance. Erario has shot his dogs; he shoots Erario. The result is that he becomes an outlaw. He flees to Rome, where he further distinguishes himself by destroying two other enemies. He is

obliged to leave Rome, and starts back to Naples with his pockets full of powder and balls. He stops to rest at a monastery, where he is lovingly received by the friars, and falls in love with a damsel of the neighbourhood. The poet, in describing the passion, reaches the lazzarone sublime. These two young people "love each other like husband and wife."* In his frequent visits to his lady-love, he attracts the attention of "the court" (the lazzarone title for the Government), which sends four captains and forty soldiers to arrest him. At this point Avossa shines as a hero. He shoots some of the soldiers, leaps through a window, puts to flight three men with an unloaded musket, and gets back to the door of the convent.

The friars tremble, but he re-assures them.

"Have no fear. I am Agostino."

The comforted fathers open the door, but *the court* is not so easily satisfied, and makes him a prisoner. He is conducted to prison, and the

* Marc Monnier comments on this: "Everything is singular in this Naples! I am not aware that English novelists have ever used this figure to describe the strength of a passion."

people run in crowds to see "this man who has filled the world with the terrors of his name."

Avossa soon finds out that two fellow-prisoners wish to kill him. It is a new *tradimento*, which he anticipates by shooting them. The warder of the prison demands the reason. The reply is ready :—

"As Judas betrayed Jesus for a little silver, these traitors wished to betray me to death, and I have punished them."

"The court" does not see it in that light, and puts irons on the feet and hands of the hero. He breaks the irons, leaps over the walls, and escapes.

He is again taken, and this time shut up in St. Elmo. Avossa is not discouraged. One fine morning he bribes the guard, and escapes with him. Where does he go? Straight to his friends in Bosco, who receive him to their arms with grateful tears for his escape. The village priest embraces him, and says to him, "with pure love"—

"My dear son, look to your life."

Avossa collects money, arms and munitions,

and *scours the mountains*. He has graduated through half a dozen homicides into an honourable brigand. Here he performs prodigies of valour. Attacked by the soldiers, he fights desperately, and finally throws himself down from a mountain into a deep valley, where he lies senseless but alive. Betrayed by a peasant, he is captured, and conducted to Naples in a carriage. It is an ovation. The court is jubilant over its victory; the people protest with their tears. He is condemned to death, and executed in the presence of a weeping crowd, who adore him as a martyred saint.*

On such recitals as these the common people of Naples were fed daily. It is needless to speak of the effect.

The brigand is the true hero of these oppressed and ignorant people. In the houses of the poor, you will find no books or newspapers; but you may find coarse pictures which recall the exploits of Fra Diavolo and Mammone.†

* Revue des deux Mondes, April, 1864.

† The fame of Mangone survives in popular tradition. "In 1823 Mr. and Mrs. Hunt were murdered by brigands near the ruins of Pæstum. I said to some peasants that both these per-

There have been periods when brigandage was not only a business, but a calling, openly held in the face of authority. Stendhal relates this fact :—

A prefect reproached a peasant for not paying his taxes. The peasant replied—

"What would you have, master? The highway yields nothing. No one travels over it. I go out every day with my gun, and I promise you to go also every night until I collect your thirteen ducats."

sons were killed by the same ball. They shook their heads, and said it must have been either the devil or another Benedetto Mangone who had done the deed."—*Lives of Banditti*, vol. i. p. 40.

CHAPTER VII.

LAND AND LABOUR—CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE—EDUCATION.

Poverty of the labourers—Uncertainty of their daily bread—Want of associations for mutual help—Want of a benevolent middle class—Large estates—Comparisons of different communes—The Proletari, Terrazzani, Cafoni, Braccianti—Effects produced by giving the labourer an interest in the produce of his toil—Brigandage a protest of misery against oppression—Character of the people—Their virtues, industry, courage and hardihood—Their vices, falsehood and illegitimate gain—Social virtues, charities, affection for kindred, friendship, love—Their vices produced by bad government—The lettered class, its constancy, sufferings heroism—San Gennaro *versus* St. Antonio—Government policy—General pardons—Statistics of education—The ignorance of wives and mothers.

THE relation of land to labour in a large portion of the Neapolitan territory is a powerful predisposing cause of brigandage. Property is held by the few, the many have no bond to attach them to the soil they till. They own nothing, are poorly paid, and have no legitimate means of

improving their condition. If they are thrown out of employment, they must starve or resort to plunder. There are no benevolent societies, no government subsidies, no well-to-do class to look after their welfare, to feed them to-day and provide them with honest employment to-morrow. In the manufacturing districts of England and France, there are frequently commercial crises in which thousands are deprived of employment and reduced to extreme suffering; but the humble labourer finds himself an object of sympathy and solicitude to philanthropic classes beyond the reach of want, and his necessities are considered by parliament and government. The means of emigration to other countries invite him in one direction, new forms of labour attract him to another; his nature is softened and his heart cheered by so much kindness and generous thoughtfulness in his more fortunate fellow men. Add to this the efforts the labourer or mechanic may make for himself, through associations of mutual help and resistance to the oppression of capital, and though the condition of the toiling classes in manufacturing districts does not present the most

cheerful aspect, it is yet relieved and cheered by many alleviations that never visit the poor peasant in the Capitanata.

It is to be expected that such a condition should sour the spirit of the labourer, and give him a moral preparation for outlawry.

Thus fitted for the use of the first political adventurer who offers to enrol him in the service of his King and Religion, it is not surprising that he accepts the proposal.

The great influence exercised by this condition of property and labour is forcibly set forth in the Massari Report.

"The social condition, the economic state, of the peasant is very unfortunate in those provinces where brigandage has reached its largest proportions. That wound of modern society, the pauperism of labour, there appears more frightful than elsewhere. The peasant has no bond which binds him to the soil. His condition is that of a true non-holder, and even though the price of his labour were not small, his economic state would not be improved. Where the system of dividing the fruits of the soil between proprietor

and labourer prevails, the number of the proletari is very small; but where cultivation is conducted on a large scale, whether in the immediate interest of the proprietor or of a renter under him, the number of this unfortunate class is necessarily very large.

"Take the Capitanata, for example. There property is held in few hands, the very term proprietor is inexact, since in reality they are not true proprietors, but censuary vassals of the Tavoliere di Puglia,* and there the proletari are very numerous. At Foggia and at San Marco in Lamis there is a class of the population called terrazzani who possess absolutely nothing, and who live by rapine. In the single city of Foggia the terrazzani amount to thousands. Cultivation is on a grand scale, no colonists, and many people who do not know how to gain the necessaries of life. 'The terrazzani and the cafoni,' said the

* This is a large plain in the north-eastern part of the kingdom of Naples, embracing the greater part of the Capitanata. It is about seventy miles in length, and thirty in breadth. Sixty years ago, it belonged almost entirely to the crown, and, in 1862, two-thirds of it still belonged to the public domain. It was part of that "*ager Romanus*," the effort to emancipate which has filled the world with a great deal of cant about agrarianism.

Director of the demesne and taxes of the province of Foggia, 'have bread of such a quality that dogs would not eat it.'"

The very term "proletario," which is left untranslated in this extract, carries a weight of wretchedness and worthlessness with it that, happily, the English language has no need to express in a single word. It indicates the condition of the lowest conceivable class of peasantry, and proletari are originally and literally people who are "good for nothing but to produce children."

Out of three hundred and seventy-five brigands who were, on the 15th of April, 1863, in the prisons of the Capitanata, two hundred and ninety-three belonged to a most miserable class of labourers called *braccianti*. This term indicates labourers who are hired from day to day, having no steady and permanent engagement.

In the Capitanata and Basilicata, the bands have been repeatedly defeated, decimated, almost destroyed, but they as often reappear in their original strength. They are recruited from the ranks of ill-paid labour. The band of Chiavone was enrolled among the most miserable peasants

of the forest of Sora and the neighbouring valley of Roveto. To the peasant living in wretchedness and squalor, without education, without the moral restraints which liberal institutions bring to bear upon the consciences of the most humble, without instruction in the first principles of Christian ethics, the life of the brigand has peculiar attractions, and these are often greatly increased by the want of even the coarsest food.

The argument on this point is powerfully enforced by a glance at those provinces where the relations of land and labour are more just and equal, where the labourer has an interest in the fruits of his toil, or lives in better, because more intimate, relations with the proprietors.

"Wherever the labourer is bound to the soil in any mode whatever, there brigandage may indeed manifest itself in the criminal class, who are to be found in every part of the world, but it cannot strike root profoundly, and is easily destroyed. In the province of Reggio di Calabria, where the condition of the peasantry is tolerable, there are no brigands. In the other two Calabrias—the provinces of Catanzaro and Cosenza—the relations

between proprietor and peasant are cordial, and when the former invokes the aid of the latter to defend his property and promote public security, he is always successful. In the provinces where the economic state and social condition of the peasantry are very unfortunate, brigandage diffuses itself rapidly, renews itself continually, and has a very tenacious life.

"On the other hand, in those provinces where that state is more tolerable, where that condition is comparatively good, brigandage is usually a fruit of importation, does not in its manifestations pass certain limits, and, when once defeated, does not easily break forth afresh."*

The region of Sora, in the Terra di Lavoro, borders upon the Pontifical territory, and is exposed to the daily incursions of bands of brigands, organized with every facility on Papal ground; but brigandage is only transitory and never exceeds the limits of importation. The chief reason for this must be found in the fact that the country abounds in industry and business, making the condition of labour com-

* Massari Report, p. 20.

paratively cheerful; and, especially, because the work upon the railway has given abundant employment and increased wages to the peasantry. In the district of Avezzano, province of Aquila, the peasants labour on the neighbouring Agro Romano and gain an honest and regular livelihood. Brigandage is imported, but strikes no root among the population. The same state of things prevails very generally in nearly all the Abruzzi di Aquila, and is to be traced mainly to the fact that there are few peasants who have no interest in their labour or no bond to the soil.*

The Abruzzo di Teramo was the last stronghold of the Bourbon. The fortress of Civitella del Tronto surrendered after the fall of Gaeta. There would not have been wanting the political stimulants to brigandage. But it has never prevailed. One of the reasons for this must doubtless be found in the comfortable conditions of labour. In the district of Chieti, there exists, between the proprietors and labourers, a contract by which the peasant furnishes his labour and the proprietor the capital. The profits of the cultivation are

* Massari Report, p. 21.

divided in determinate proportions varying with the nature of the produce and the degree of fertility in the soil. Brigandage has been imported into this region, but has never taken hold of the peasantry.

The force of this reasoning is strengthened by comparisons of neighbouring valleys or hamlets, in one of which the labourer is comfortable, and in the other miserable. In Chieti itself, Bomba and Montazzoli furnish this contrast. In Bomba, a comfortable peasantry and few brigands; in Montazzoli, a miserable peasantry and brigandage in considerable proportions.

"An honourable senator of the Capitanata narrated to us the following fact. During the ten years of French military occupation, Orsara was one of the regions most fruitful in brigands. The Bourbon government resolved to divide the crown lands of the district among those who did not possess a greater amount of property than twenty carlines.

"The applications were very numerous. Each person was allowed to acquire two jugeri and twice that if the lands were poor.

"The social and economic conditions of labour being in this mode changed, Orsara has furnished a very small contingent to the existing brigandage; this contingent being only two."*

This painful condition of the labouring classes is the fatal inheritance which the feudal system has transmitted to our times. Where land is held by large proprietors, and the peasant has no share in the fruits of the soil which his sweat fertilizes, a sense of injustice easily developes itself into the spirit of revenge. In so far as brigandage is recruited from these classes, it is the savage and brutal protest of misery against centuries of oppression.

CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

We find in the condition of a large portion of the Neapolitan people occasions and stimulants to brigandage. These occasions and stimulants operating in this form of disorder for some centuries, have fixed upon the people an immorality which from habit has become character.

* Massari Report, p. 23.

We are no longer surprised that an entire commune is accustomed at times to transform itself suddenly into a band of robbers and assassins. The peaceful agriculturists throw down the hoe and spade, exchange the plough handle for the musket stock, and take to the highway to plunder and murder. Having satisfied the fierce thirst which impelled them, they hide their homicidal arms, and resume the peaceful implements and tranquil life of farmers and shepherds.*

In some communes the people are by tradition brigands or accomplices in brigandage.

* See, Saint-Jorioz, "Brigantaggio," p. 16.

The fire which burns under the calm exterior of these people is astonishing.

"At Gallipoli, several young men with whom I had been acquainted, surprised a townsman in the olive groves, near the beautiful village of Pisciotti, and murdered him in cold blood. . . . Each of them buried a stiletto in the body of the victim, whom they left dead and horribly mangled. . . . They were all very young men, some of them were striplings. One of them had been my guide and companion through the country. I had always found him honest, kindhearted, very intelligent and quiet, even to meekness, in his manner. A brother of his, who was also a great deal with me, and also to all appearance a most amiable young man, did indeed rather alarm me one day when a ruffian of Gallipoli insulted me; for he deliberately offered to take upon himself the office of a Callum Beg, and to quiet the bully by a thrust in the dark. But this was an ebullition of gratitude for me!"—M'Farlane, *Banditti*, vol. i. p. 212.

This second nature of entire communities is a compound product of a complexity of causes operating through generations. To unravel all the threads of this net of circumstantial and acquired character, would be too great a task for any single life-time; nor shall I attempt the long and painful work. I confine myself to pointing out the facts which lie on the surface, leaving to others the labour of following out the intricate paths by which human consciences and wills are seduced and suborned to pass habitually, and apparently unconsciously, the plain boundaries of right and wrong. The most obvious fact in the Neapolitan's character is that these habitual immoralities are in contrast with the general tone of his life. It is equally obvious that it would be rank injustice to comprehend the whole people in the charge of being by habit addicted to robbery and homicide. In fine, it is very difficult to portray clearly the moral condition of the Neapolitans without creating false impressions in the minds of those who do not know them. They are a people of some extraordinary virtues, and they are, as a rule, underrated by tourists. They are commonly

called cowardly, effeminate and lazy; but they are really a courageous, hardy and industrious race. The mistake has arisen very naturally. The tourist who saw men submit to be beaten by those better dressed than themselves, who found that he could cane his own servant or coachman with impunity—who, in fine, saw masses of men submitting to all imaginable indignities from their superiors in social rank—inferred that the race was given to poltroonery.

If he had widened his vision to embrace more facts, he would have learned that the same man, who submitted to be beaten by a man having a better coat or a bit of gold lace on his cap, would fight to the death with one of his equals. The most valiant men may possess too much common sense to contend against powers of greatly superior force. It is commonly accounted good generalship to lead a small army from the front of an overwhelming force, nor is the courage of the retiring commander thereby impugned. The apparently abject Neapolitan knew that all society above him was ready to crush him at the first hostile demonstration on his part. He took blows

patiently because he had learned that he must take them. Doubtless such a condition of society tends to degrade the people; but popular courage found so many vents and occasions, the very state of society in which it was possible to maltreat your inferior was so near to a state of anarchy, that personal courage was cultivated on one side quite as rapidly as it was depressed on the other. The Bourbons sought to secure order by a perpetual policy of depression. Personal humanity stood for nothing; social position was everything. The Neapolitan people learned to stand out of the way of superior forces, and to submit to indignities and humiliations descending upon them from a throne supported by civilized Europe. This is not the noblest attitude for an oppressed people; but it is the attitude which nearly every portion of the human race has at some time or other been forced to assume.

That this prudence was extended to all the relations of society, that under the appearance of fear it apotheosized brute force, and proclaimed the right of the strongest with more eloquence than Proudhon, finds explanation in the artistic

skill of Bourbonism. It impressed the leading principle of its rule upon all classes of society—the fear of power. People of any original virtue are not rendered abject and cowardly by such a system; rather the system defeats itself. The frank courage that will brook no wrong is exchanged for a more sagacious and better disciplined valour. The poor man learns that while he must, for the time, endure insult and contumely, yet, in the last resort, his title to anything, even to his life, depends on the weight of his arm and the pluck behind it. There is cultivated a silent force, a submissive potentiality, which in time shakes off the litfleness of royalty. Precisely this happened in Naples. Garibaldi entered the city with scarcely twenty men, there were six thousand Bourbon soldiers in the city; but the long-enduring multitudes who worshipped the hero of Milazzo were the real masters of the situation.

In like manner the error of attributing effeminacy to the Neapolitans, proceeds from a hasty reasoning upon only a part of the facts. A warm, soft, generous climate, *ergo*, an effeminate race; but Naples is too near the seat of the Roman Em-

pire to permit any illusion of this nature. It may be doubted if there is a people of greater power of endurance than this race. Even in Naples itself, the poor plebs subsist on coarser fare and live through more misery than any other population. But if you go abroad among the men of the mountains and valleys, the race exhibits a truly wonderful hardihood and endurance.

They have been called indolent with the same rashness. In fact, no epithet is so freely and loosely bandied about as the term indolent. We are told that mankind is naturally indolent, that particular races, classes, and professions are indolent, with little care to distinguish the cases or the grounds of the reasoning. Men are naturally indolent only in the sense that they do not work without motives adapted to their nature and condition.*

* It has been abundantly repeated that the negro will not work without compulsion. The fact is that, accustomed to work under physical compulsion, if this be withdrawn and no other sort of compulsion be substituted, the negro remains idle. The same would be true of any class of men of any race. The negro is found by experience to be illy prepared for the operation of higher motives than the slave-driver's whip; but as soon as he is placed upon higher grounds, the motives that impel other hands are found to acquire power, and finally to control him.

We all labour under the whip of some driver; it may be affection for our families, the necessity of earning our bread, the love of applause, the desire to accumulate, or the ambition to excel. Nobody works for nothing towards nothing. The Neapolitans, in Naples, were seen to be unemployed, it was concluded that they were indolent. No inference could be more illogical. The Neapolitan was idle because he had nothing to do. He worked with admirable patience and courage when he had work furnished to his hands. The charge was never, even apparently, true of the country. There the most patient toil on the barest hope of remuneration has always been exhibited. When the present Government set itself to absorb the wasted labour of Naples, it found the people ready to do its work. On the railroads, on the public works, there has been no lack of willing and industrious workmen.*

Justice should be rendered to another portion of the Neapolitan people in this estimate of their

* One of the first to discover the fallacy of the current opinion of the Neapolitans was Mr. Hillard, of Boston, whose testimony to their willingness to labour is valuable. See "Six Months in Italy."

character. The lettered class are entitled to the highest praise for their long-enduring fortitude, their exemplary political prudence, and their steadfast faith in the principles of liberal government.

Marc Monnier renders only a just tribute to the educated class, when he says—"Their numbers and worth show what may be expected of this country when it shall have lived for some time under a law of progress, of morality and justice. Up to this time, Naples has furnished to Italy the greatest number of men eminent in every branch of knowledge. Even before the revolution, her proscribed sons were ruling in upper Italy, and among the Neapolitan exiles were found the most valued advocates and physicians. Neapolitans filled the public offices, and occupied the chairs in the universities. It is fit to record this for it is too often forgotten.

"It is not just to forget that for twelve years, in exile, in the penal works, or in a pretended liberty more watched, more isolated than the life of a prison, the Neapolitan literati have for the most part furnished an example of dignity, of perseverance, and of sacrifice. Under a succes-

sion of the worst reigns, without schools, without education, without emulations, without possible associations, they reached culture through their isolated exertions; and, separated from the rest of Europe, did not fall behind in the march of progress, but furnished to civilization their complement of labour, their contingent of soldiers, and leaders; some of them heroes, almost all martyrs."

The social character of the Neapolitans exhibits remarkable virtues. Nowhere else are the love of kindred, respect for parents, devotion to friends, the attachments of lovers, so strong. Sons who have become men pay over their earnings to their parents. Friendship takes on a type of vehemence which makes it a passion. A love kindled by a single look endures chastely for long years, until the youth, putting soldo to soldo, has purchased the bed and furnished the humble room in which he is to bestow his faithfully awaiting betrothed. Charity under all its forms is as warm as the sky above them. Poor families, already over-burdened with children, adopt the orphaned children of their neighbours.

Those who beg are certain of kindly treatment and the slender alms of their fellow poor. Indeed, throughout Italy the people are in the habit of giving to street mendicants, and this is the principal reason why mendicancy is so prevalent. In any city, the foreigner may see his own female servant, earning perhaps only two dollars per month, giving alms to the beggar whom he has spurned.

The vices of Neapolitan character are the fruits of long mis-government, of a despotic system which pushed itself so far as to reach a point, "where gravitation shifting turned the other way," and it became anarchy. The morals of the people present the same singular phenomenon. There was a government which was so strong as to have lost all power, so vigorous as to have dissolved the bonds of society; a people who had demonstrated the possibility of the impossible, while they committed the commonest offences against morality without knowing that they were immoral, asking the blessing of the Virgin and her Son on crimes baptized heroic.

United Italy found here a race poor, ignorant

and immoral. The words have an interdependence: the ignorance is a fruit of the poverty, and the immorality grew out of both. Your first experience of the Neapolitan was (I dare not say *is*, for the progress of this people has been wonderful since 1860) that he was dishonest, insincere and terribly given to lying, and time only confirmed first impressions.

This moral degradation is one of the bitter fruits of the government system under which they have lived—a system of which their poverty was an essential part. Educated masses could not be the slaves of despotism, therefore they were kept in ignorance. But, when the masses are rendered comfortable, they manage to diffuse intelligence and secure education without government aid. There was no sure path to a Bourbon's idea of successful government but over the heads of an impoverished and miserable populace. The plebeian, thus depressed to the verge of starvation, perpetuated his miserable existence by a thousand artifices of fraud and falsehood which have become habit, and from habit, nature.

In most civilized countries there is a large middle class, who have in great part lifted themselves from the ranks of labour. It is one of the most beautiful manifestations of human nature that this class constitutes itself the guardian and patron of the poor.

The coffers of benevolence in England and the United States are filled, not by the noble and wealthy, though these furnish shining instances of liberality, but by those who are barely comfortable themselves. Now, in Naples there was no numerous middle class; and the Government jealously took care that there should not be. The poverty, ignorance and moral degradation of the plebs, went on unchecked and continually increasing.

Those who make themselves advocates of the Bourbons have never explained how it happened that these multitudes of *miserables* went on increasing, each generation becoming more wretched, in a land endowed with the richest natural gifts. As soon as the babes were removed from their mothers' breasts, sometimes even before—since they are nursed for three years—

they stretched out their hands for charity, and with eyes full of tears, swore by all the saints in paradise that they were orphans from the womb.

Such children became vagabonds from their earliest years. They soon learned to practise small thieving, which they carried on until they were overtaken and cast into prison. The youth's career now opened before him. If he had learned to handle a knife, if he had a quick eye and a bold spirit, he could aspire to what his education had taught him was the highest eminence opened to a plebeian—he could become a *Camorrist*. Every country has its proportion of vagabonds—men of foul life, pimps, thieves, and adventurers; but in other countries these classes are scattered, without organization, and therefore without their proportion of power. In Naples the rascals organized, and made themselves a power in the land, always feared and respected, sometimes honoured with serving the state.

The religion of this people was simply a superstition. The sturdy morality of Christianity had been exchanged for the worship of images and saints, false miracles, and a gross

religious worship. The boiling of the blood of San Gennaro is repeated still. The saint has upheld all the forms of government in Naples, has been on both sides of every question, and has always favoured the strongest party that offered him alliance. So many inconsistencies only prove him to be a genuine Neapolitan, or rather prove that the priest who manages the ebullition of his blood is a Neapolitan of the Neapolitans. Crowds throng to behold the ceremony whenever a political end is to be subserved by his saintship. His decision is more conclusive than a popular vote in most countries. Garibaldi took good care to secure his approval; and the reverence of the masses for the great Dictator was in part due to the ready, and even enthusiastic approbation of the saint.*

It is impossible to treat apart the influence of the government in lowering the moral tone

* In 1799, when San Gennaro went over to the republic, Cardinal Ruffo repudiated him as a traitor, and set up St. Antonio of Padua in his stead. The rivalry then started is not yet extinct. San Gennaro is always on the side of the Government *de facto*. St. Antonio is faithful to the fortunes of the Bourbons.

of the people. That influence is everywhere active. Take an illustration:—

The system of publishing general pardons practised by absolute sovereigns was carried to such an excess at Naples, as to contribute powerfully to the demoralization of the people. King Carlo, on his first entry into the city, paused in front of the prison of the Vicaria, and having received in sign of homage the keys of these dismal dungeons, ordered them to be thrown open. It was a significant and prophetic act of grace. The rascals in Naples, with the aid of foreign arms, suppressed three revolutions, and three times called back his fugitive son.

During the first thirty years of the reign of Ferdinand I., *nineteen* general pardons were proclaimed. The birth of a child, a marriage, or a birthday, in the royal family, was celebrated by a new prostration of public justice. It is needless to moralize on the fact. No one will read these pages who does not believe that the uniform and impartial execution of criminal law is absolutely necessary to public security, and that no readier means than frequent and general pardons could

be devised for abasing the public morals to the level of crime.

It is useless to theorize to my readers on the relations of ignorance to crime. Our public schools attest our faith in education as a safeguard of public morality, and a preventive of crime.

The educated class has never been numerous in any part of Italy. To us the statistics of public instruction, even in North Italy, after some years of constitutional liberty, of common schools, and a free press, are matter for profound astonishment. But in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, where ignorance was promoted upon system until 1860, the figures are appalling.

Now look at the statistics, which are official.

In 1862 only four hundred and eighty-three in every one thousand of population knew how to read in the old provinces and Lombardy. This is a gloomy picture, but as we move down the Peninsula, the scene grows melancholy beyond description. In the Emilia, Tuscany, the Marches and Umbria, the number who know how to read in a thousand is reduced to three hundred and five. We should be prepared to expect a low

figure in Sicily and in Naples, but the statistics appal us when they report those who can read as only one hundred and thirteen in each thousand of population.

Throughout the kingdom, the populous centres furnish a larger proportion of readers than the country. The rule is a constant one, too, that the females furnish a smaller proportion than the males. In the sparsely inhabited portions of Naples and Sicily, those who can read are ninety-six in one thousand; but of this number only thirty-three are females.* Now, it is these sparsely-settled regions which have furnished the contingents of brigandage. We can easily see how one of the best checks to irregular living, that is, the influence of wives and mothers, may be wanting in communities where wives and mothers are wholly illiterate. We are not surprised to learn that these women, far from restraining their husbands and lovers from a life of plunder, become their companions in the wood and mountain, and sometimes surpass the ruder sex in brutality and ferocity.

* These figures are taken from Matteucci, Rivista dei comuni Italiani.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAMORRA.

This strange secret society organized extortion—Uncertainty of its origin—Probably a Spanish importation—Traces of it in the sixteenth century—Imposed taxes on all the weak classes—Ruled in the prisons—Powerlessness of the people—The society governed the masses—Alliance of the police with the Camorra—Anecdote of a courageous Calabrian priest—The Convict Islands—A female Camorrist—The lottery—The mother of the Gracchi at Naples—The unorganized Camorra or brigandage of the town—Ransoms paid—Information kept from the soldiers—Strange popular infatuations—Incidents—Capture of the octogenarian priest Baccari—One of the conscript fathers of Pico—Diseased communal governments—Difficulty of reforming them.

THE moral condition of the Neapolitans is illustrated in a single institution, which had obtained a stronger position in the country than that possessed by the Bourbon government — the *Camorra.*

Bourbonism fell like a rotten edifice. The

merest novice in the condition of things in Italy knows that the political value of the adherents of Francis is simply nothing. The Camorra, on the contrary, had so firm a hold on the degraded population, that it has continued to exist, and has given the Government infinite trouble. It exists to-day in the prisons and penal works, and in case of new disorders would doubtless develope itself into its old proportions.

The *Camorra* is organized extortion. It consists of an association among the people, by which the strong oppress the weak, and in exchange for protection collect a regular tax upon all the helpless classes. It originated in the prisons, its leaders have usually been condemned criminals, its court was held in the squalid dungeons of Naples. And yet, from the depths of prisons, with their hands and feet bound in chains, these chiefs frightened honest men, who were living in full liberty, and the timid visited them to pay regularly their monthly tribute. It had chiefs in each of the twelve districts of Naples, in all the cities of the kingdom, in every battalion of the army. Wherever the people were

collected in masses, it exercised an almost undisputed sway. The Government made a fitful opposition. The people submitted with a certain satisfaction. They received a degree of protection from the Camorrists. That is to say, the Camorra appropriated exclusively the right to levy black mail. It is said that the market-women turned pale with affright, when, after the establishment of the new government, they missed the Camorrist at the city gates. They did not feel sure of the contents of their baskets until they had paid their soldi to the Camorra.

The traveller who landed at Naples from a steamer in 1859 and 1860, if he had been of an observant turn, would have seen that his boatman paid a small portion of his fare to a well-dressed man standing quite at his ease on the wharf. If our traveller had inquired the reason of this proceeding, the reply would have been, "He is a Camorrist." In like manner the porter who carried his trunk to the hotel, the hack-driver, and even the boots, would have been seen paying, with the utmost complacency, a small per cent. upon their earnings. In the

small shops, in the cafés, in the gambling and liquor saloons, the same strange tax-gatherer was always to be found. No person unacquainted with Neapolitan society would have suspected that this proceeding was a lawless levy of black-mail—an organized brigandage under the very eyes of authority.

It is worth while to describe, at some length, this social barnacle, which grew to vast size under the Bourbon throne.

The origin of this secret order is uncertain; it probably came in under the Spanish viceroys. The curious reader will find in Cervantes some scenes that strongly resemble occurrences which were common in Naples before 1860. The word *camorra* is of doubtful lineage, but is probably the name of a species of short coat or jacket worn by the members of the society. The society does not keep records, and it has been too little noticed by the former governments to permit the collection of any precise details of its early history. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the Viceroy, Cardinal Gran Vela, wrote: "I am informed that, within the prisons of the

Vicaria, many extortions are practised by the prisoners, who create among their number *priors* in the said prisons, and require tributes of oil for the lamps of the Madonna, and other illegal payments, thus constituting themselves masters in the prisons."

A report which exists in the National Library at Naples, bearing date 1674, contains the following paragraph:—

"In the prisons thefts occur to such an extent, that, as soon as a criminal enters, his clothes are put to sale, and he finds himself despoiled of them without knowing how it is done; and if he does know, he would not dare to speak from fear for his life, since homicides and poisonings are more easily perpetrated within the prisons than outside of them. The most brutal maltreatment is inflicted on those who are for the first time imprisoned, in order to get from them any money they may possess, on the pretext that every new prisoner must contribute to pay for the lamp, or for another purpose which we modestly omit."

The similarity of these misdeeds, and the

identity of the pretexts under which they were perpetrated with what is known of the Camorra of the last decade, shows that the foundations of the society were already laid in the middle of the sixteenth century. In 1529, a certain Giulio Monti was hung as a chief of plebeian bandits who, in the midst of the city and in full day, subjected to the payment of taxes and ransoms all defenceless people who had any affection for their own ears.

It is probable that at this period the society had not yet taken an organic shape and definite form. The feeble and vacillating tenure of a sovereign of those times did not permit him, if he had really wished it, to extend his protection to the humblest members of his civil family. The feudal fashion of distributing protection downwards, through a graduated line of chiefs, had left a heritage of weakness to the first rulers under the modern system. The disorders which had been introduced into the old system rendered the poor less safe than when the baron was supreme. The humble members of society fell a prey to the cupidity and violence of the strong,

who banded themselves together alike against king and subject. The king or the viceroy compromised with the Camorrist of those times on a tacit understanding that, up to a certain limit, the people were to be eaten by their persecutors.

Out of this state of things, succeeding upon the first shocks to the feudal system, and the first efforts to reach the people with a sovereign authority, the Camorra took at some time in the eighteenth century a definite shape. As the inevitable progress of society extended the dominion of the king, and lessened the importance of the baron—as the prince and the peasant came into the visible relation of king and subject—the plunderers, robbers and assassins, whose occupation had hitherto thrived in open day without effort at unity, were forced into disguises and organizations for the safety of their persons and the success of their trade, in the fears and helplessness of the weak.

It is enough to know that, for centuries, the property and persons of a considerable portion of the population of Naples have been in the power

of the criminal class, especially of an organization existing in defiance of the Government; and that this society, at times so strong as to challenge and receive alliance with the supreme power in the state, gradually drew to itself a well-defined class of prerogatives and claims, which were never for a moment disputed by the plebeian populace. Violence and extortion were the two synonyms of the Camorra, and its members sought and kept these alone. They seem never to have had a political ambition, nor to have interfered in political combinations, until 1860. During all the time of the Spanish viceroys and the Bourbon kings, a set of men lived and thrived at Naples by working upon the fears of unprotected masses of people. It is of little importance to this present inquiry when this society began to be called Camorra.

The Camorra, strange as it may seem, fulfilled some of the offices of government, gave a certain protection, and secured a certain order. The people looked upon the society as more affectionate and paternal than the government of the King. It was at their side, immediately over them, and,

while it enforced its illegitimate claims, did not tolerate any less regular extortion or violence than its own. The government of the King was inaccessible when the people were wronged, deaf when they complained, and powerless, or at least silent, before the oppression of organized malevolence.

From 1830 to 1860, the Government occupied itself mainly with political offences. The police of the kingdom was wonderfully skilful in scenting the slightest odour of discontent, the faintest smell of republican rottenness; but the ordinary crimes, which seemed to concern only the safety and lives of the subjects, attracted but a tardy and indifferent attention.

There is much reason to believe that during this period the Camorra was associated with the police in the control of the lower classes, the obtaining of information and the arrest of offenders.

A curious confession of a penitent Camorrist* gives, in a systematic form, with divisions into articles, the rules and practice in this coalition of an infamous government with its most infamous

* Monnier states that he has seen this singular document.]

subjects. According to these rules, which were a sort of secret code of the Camorra, the society was under the superintendence of the police. The day following his election as a Camorrist, each new member was presented by his chief to the commissary of his quarter, and gave to the official of Ferdinand the sum of ten piastres. This seems to have conferred the freedom of the city upon the young aspirant for distinction in crime. The prefect of the police was duly informed of these proceedings, and received, at the beginning of each month, the sum of one hundred ducats. Not content with this share in the gains of the society, the prefect of police took supervision of its officials, and himself appointed the Camorra chiefs of the twelve quarters of Naples, to each of whom the sum of one hundred ducats was paid monthly out of the secret police funds. At the same time, the public functionaries filled their purses out of regular assessments upon the money extorted by the society from the poor whom they were bound by their office to protect.

There are necessarily no documents to substantiate the assertions of this penitent. All these

proceedings passed without records, written contracts, or even distinct avowals between the parties to this nefarious traffic in disorder and crime. Those who were engaged in it are not likely to inform the public. But the confession is supported by so many other circumstances, and is so perfectly consistent with the general course of the administration of Ferdinand, that there can be no reasonable doubt of its substantial correctness.

It is certain that the Camorra was respected by both Ferdinands, and frequently used by the Government. In fact, it constituted a species of irregular police, more or less recognized and employed by the regular authority. When an important theft occurred in any part of the city, the commissary of the police called to him the chief of the Camorra, and charged him to find the offender. The thief was always found, unless he happened to be the chief of the Camorra or the commissary.

In the prisons these men ruled; and the officers in charge, from love of ease and indifference to the rights of the prisoners, or from a conviction that there was no other way of securing so much order, delegated a species of authority to the

Camorra. Under its protection one was safer than under that of the King's officers. Into the depth of these dungeons, the power of the throne rarely penetrated, but the Camorrists were always there, and there in overpowering force. Despite all precautions they smuggled knives* into the prisons and on occasion used them to terrify their victims. Their rule was terrible and corrupting to the last degree; but the hopeless wretch who found himself, for political offences or suspicion of them, thrust into these dens of vice and crime, was happy if by prompt payment, or even by resolute resistance, he could win the favour of the society. I say resistance. It happened that a certain priest was thrown into the prisons of the Vicaria. He was approached

* In all the prisons the society had a store of weapons so well concealed that the guardians and superintendents never could discover them. This deposit was called the plant, and was always in the charge of the chief, who carried at least three upon his person, in spite of the utmost precautions of the guards. An inspector informs me that having learned of the existence of these three knives, he ordered an examination so minute that he found them in the least mentionable part of the prison. A quarter of an hour afterwards a new inspection showed that the chief had already three new knives. "Take these away," said the Camorrist, "and in fifteen minutes I shall have three more." —*Marc Monnier.*

at his entrance by a Camorrist, who demanded money for the lamp of the Madonna. The poor priest was unable to comply with the demand because he had no money. The Camorrist became angry, and raised his baton, "Ah," exclaimed the priest, a courageous Calabrian, "you would not be so fierce if I were armed as you!"

"There is no difficulty," responded the Camorrist, wounded in his sense of honour, and immediately going into the next room, he demanded two knives. Returning, he gave one knife to the priest. They fought—and the priest most dexterously killed his adversary. The poor priest now for the first time felt fear. He had killed a man, and that man was a Camorrist. He was exposed to the vengeance of the state, and to the furious and most certain vengeance of the society. To his surprise he escaped both. The Camorrists admiring his courage, concealed the homicide in some inexplicable way, and when the priest went to his bed, he found upon it his share, as a Camorrist, of the weekly distribution of the gains of the fraternity. This share he continued to receive during the whole period of his impri-

sonment.* I have said that their rule was demoralizing in the extreme. The penal island of Tremiti furnishes an illustration. In this place the Bourbon government had formed a penal colony. This colony was so managed that it extinguished the sparks of virtue which might still warm the breasts of the criminal. Take an instance of this management. The Government had conceived the idea of introducing the benign influences of the family relation. For this purpose it shipped a quantity of prostitutes, and constrained the two sexes to shameful alliances. This moral anarchy was completed by sending from time to time the most outrageous of the Camorrists to this penal inferno. The authority of the society was established in the island.

* Another Calabrian had one night won at a gaming-house. Leaving it, he was met outside by a man with a baton, who threateningly demanded a share of his gains for the Camorra. The Calabrian refused and drew a knife. The Camorrist immediately left him. The next day the Calabrian was respectfully saluted by another man, armed with a baton, who presented him a short sword, and begged him to accept it for his brave conduct on the preceding evening. The surprised provincial at first refused, but at length accepted the present. He afterwards found himself saluted by plebeians whom he did not know, and who considered him a Camorrist.

Every convict received five pence per day from the Government. On this he was obliged to subsist. The Camorrist began by taking one-tenth of this sum for his own account. Two-tenths went to a common fund, which was religiously preserved. The convict had seven-tenths remaining. He was without labour, without friends or affections, and fell into the only occupation to be found upon the island, that of gambling. The Camorrist who took charge of the convicts claimed one-tenth upon all the bets, for the trouble of giving protection and deciding disputes. The fortunes of the convicts were constantly changing, but the Camorrist always won; since every bet yielded him the invariable tenth. At the end of the day, tenth by tenth, the pittance of each prisoner had passed into his purse. But for the penny put into the common fund, the convict must have died of starvation. Out of this pittance he had to clothe and feed himself, since he had no other resources. The society grew rich out of these poor convicts, whom it held in its power alike by their vices and their necessities.

The same rule prevailed in the prisons of the

Vicaria. Under Ferdinand II. many of the choicest spirits of the nation spent their time in these terrible dungeons. It thus happens that there is no want of information concerning the habits and daily life of the prisoners. One of the most constant victims of the Bourbons was Alexander Avitabile, an honoured servant of the present government. He was an actor of some merit and popularity, and spent one half his time on the stage and the other half in prison. His arrests and his releases were alike without explanation; and he could only credit the first to unwavering patriotism, and the second to want of all proof of having committed any actual offence.

By him and by other equally intelligent observers, some of the secrets of these horrible dens have been revealed.

The poor man who entered became the victim of the society in precisely the same way as the convicts at Tremiti; that is, the Camorra got control of his little pittance, stimulated his vices, and kept him dependent upon it for the supply of his necessities.

The worst prisons are supposed to allow a

measure of liberty; at least the liberty of occasional solitude. But in the Vicaria, the prisoner had ever at his heels, not the Bourbon guardian, but the Bourbon Camorrist, whose brutal violence he could not escape. He was forced to yield to this surveillance, to resign himself to the control of this self-appointed police. But what profit could the Camorra derive from the poor? Twice a year the prisoner was supplied with a suit of clothing. This he sold to the Camorra. The Camorrist sold the clothing back again to those who furnished it originally. The prisoner lived clothed in rags, or in a state of semi-nakedness. Nor was this all. Half of his daily allowance of bread and soup was returned in the same way to the prison contractors. With the small sums which these sales afforded, the prisoner bought tobacco, wine, and the rest went to the gaming table. The furnishing of tobacco, wine and gaming cards, and the permission to use them, was as much in the power of the society as if it had held letters-patent from Ferdinand. In this way the money of the prisoner came regularly back into the hands of those from whom he had

received it. The sums gained by this trade were not trifling. In a single prison, the profits were sometimes two hundred and eighty ducats per week. A portion of these sums was regularly paid over to the keeper of the prison.

The prisoners paid the society for every privilege. The inevitable tenth was inexorably demanded on each transaction. The right to buy, the right to sell, justice and privilege, the necessary and the superfluous, were alike subjected to taxation. If the prisoners happened to be possessed of some little money, as in the case of political offenders of good station, they were assigned servants, for whom a liberal allowance was required, and these servants were in turn taxed heavily upon their wages.

This terrible society ruled, because under the government of the Bourbons it had almost an unlimited freedom of action. Sometimes courted, always used, and only feebly dealt with for its most heinous offences, the humble classes felt themselves to be in its power. Its vengeance was certain. When it decreed a death, the victim's days were numbered. To execute these

decrees the younger members of the order, who had taken only the initiatory degree, were usually delegated;* and the successful execution of the commission raised the murderer to the rank of a full member. It will scarcely be believed that these commissions were joyfully accepted, and often there were strifes among the young initiates for the bloody office. What is still more surprising is, that the initiate often assumed the responsibility of a crime which he had not committed in order to secure his promotion. To prove that the homicide had been done under provocation, a knife was sometimes placed in the hands of the murdered man. By this astute proceeding, the ambitious assassin secured his life, while he obtained promotion, and that coveted field for the exercise of his talents and the making of his fame and fortune—a Neapolitan prison.

It was not alone in the prisons that the society

* Filippo Cirillo, a Camorrist, had rendered some service to the inspector, Michele Ruggieri, and in turn asked some favour of the inspector, who refused it. Cirillo condemned Ruggieri to death, and delegated the office of executioner to a young initiate. Being himself about to be transferred to another prison, he said to the initiate, "Twenty-four hours after my departure, kill the inspector." The order was obeyed.—*Monnier*, p. 54.

bore rule. The Camorrists presided over the gaming table in all parts of the city, exacted tribute at the gates upon the produce of the country, and extended their claims to nearly all regular trade.

I cannot agree with Monnier that this proceeded from cowardice in the people. While the society reduced extortion to system, it supplied the want of a better police, and prevented a thousand disorders. In a gaming saloon a hundred strong men submitted to the decision of a single Camorrist, and all promptly paid over to him the tenth of their winnings; not because they feared him, but because this bully, loaded down with jewellery, and armed with a knife, was the symbol of order. That Naples had no better symbol was not the fault of its oppressed people. This organizing the thieves of a country into a subordinate government to supply the defects of the imperial one was strange; but it must be borne in mind, that an association of honest men would not have been permitted to discharge the same office.

That the ignorant population regarded it in

this light is clear from their discontent when the present government laid hands on the society.* Nor was the use of their power and protection confined to the poor. Merchants of the first class kept Camorrists in their pay to watch over the

* Monnier relates that, in 1860, he congratulated a peasant who brought vegetables and fruits to the city, on the arrest of the Camorrists. The poor man threw up his hands in horror, and protested that he was ruined. "In place of one robber we shall have thirty, who will take all our blood." He asked a hackman whether he was pleased with the change. The reply is amusing. "I am an assassinated man. I have bought a *dead* horse, who does not know the roads, refuses to go except when it suits his pleasure, slips when he goes up hill, and falls when he goes down, is afraid of fire-crackers and bells, reared up yesterday in the grotto of Posilippo, and scared a flock of sheep which were blocking up the road. A Camorrist, who protected me, and had his station at the horse-market, would have saved me from this robbery. He watched over the sales, and took his trifle from buyer and seller. Last year I had to sell a blind horse, and he made him pass for a beast with two good eyes, because he was my protector. He has been put in prison, and I have had to buy without his help this brute of a beast. He was a great gentleman! (era un gran galantuomo.)"

The people had more confidence in the Camorrists than in the regular officers of justice. "I know a vine-dresser in the vicinity of Naples who found, on waking one fine morning, that he had been robbed; during the night all his money had been stolen. He made his complaint, not to the delegate of his quarter, not to the brigadier of the military station close at hand; but he ran into the nearest tavern, and recognizing the reigning Camorrist by his fierce bearing and the rings which covered his fingers, he made his complaint, and offered a liberal reward for the recovery of the money. The money was found."—*Monnier*

landing and shipping of goods, which otherwise were not safe from the hands of less regular robbers. The shipments of coin especially were insured by this irregular police. In fact, contraband was at some periods the rule in the port, the regular payment of duties the exception. The best merchants employed Camorrists to secure the landing of their goods without the payment of duties. The regular tariff for this was one half the duties. The goods were often landed under the eyes of the custom-house officers, who took their share of the gains.

This association within Neapolitan society shows what that society was in itself. Brigandage is an outgrowth of that love of illicit gain, that moral obtuseness on rights of property and want of conscience in trading or gaining one's daily bread which are at the bottom of the organized Camorra. Perhaps no Neapolitan priest ever preached on the text, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men," at all events, the doctrine was unknown. From the throne downwards all classes seemed to have lost the sense of the right and the just as the foundation of property.

The unorganized Camorra proceeded upon the same principles, and was the twin brother of that whose bully chiefs held court in the cells of the Vicaria. Monnier, writing in 1862, says: "This form of violence is still exercised in all the houses of the city. My hotel has the usual number of persons in its service, from the highest to the lowest ranks, from the butler to the porter, from the cook to the scullion, from the valet to the boot-black. Now, in this hierarchy of subordinates, beside the oppressors by title, there reigns a Camorra which oppresses in its turn. This Camorra is represented by a woman,—yes, by a woman! She has fire in her eyes and a knife in her hand. I found her one day with her hands bloody. She told me, laughing, that it was nothing. It is she who commands. There is no dispute in which she does not take part, either on one side or the other. No strife into which she does not thrust herself with extended hands. She carries on her little trade in the house, appropriates what she finds, watches over the purchases, taxes those who supply the provisions, and levies her contributions upon every thing. The rest

know it, and are silent, because they fear her. She does more: she administers justice. One day the Camorrists of the port had extorted five soldi from a porter of the house. The poor man, strong as a shark but cowardly as a frog, returned downcast with his lessened earnings, counting upon his fingers what the five soldi might have gained at the lottery. 'What is the matter?' demanded the woman. As soon as she was informed, she darted off like an arrow. In two bounds she was at the port, and turning heaven and earth upside down with her clamour. The crowd began to assemble, the carbineers were running to the spot. The Camorrists, fearful of arrest, gave her the five soldi. In a quarter of an hour she returned in triumph, holding up in her hands the recovered money. I do not know that she restored it to the porter; I declare only that she recaptured it from the Camorrists."

The passion of the Neapolitans for gaming and lotteries is a manifestation of the same want of conscience in matters of money. It is a fatal lesson to give to a poor man that there is an easier way of making a dollar than earning it. This

lesson each Neapolitan has usually learned in his infancy, rather he was born with the belief. His enforced and cultivated idleness gave him large leisure to be occupied in some way, and when work does not command or invite, diversion must be found in some other mode. This earnest people loves gain, and shut up from legitimate roads to it, fell naturally into its immoral pursuit. There is probably no city on the globe where games of chance are so universally practised. I have said that it was the only distraction in the prisons and penal colonies. In truth, it is the first and last diversion, or rather, so earnestly do they pursue it, the first and last occupation of the Neapolitans. The lottery is the most convincing proof of this love of immoral gain. In Naples it is a passion. The passion is not confined to the Neapolitans, but infects large portions of the people in North Italy. But, if one would learn the vast distance there is between the two sections, let him attend the drawing of a lottery in Turin and in Naples. In the former city, the event is of little importance, though watched with eager interest by those who have ventures on the wheel

of fortune. But in Naples, it used to be an event like the Sumter meeting in New York. If one would note the effect of despotic institutions in cultivating this passion, let him make the comparison even between Turin and Venice. I once witnessed the drawing of a lottery in the Piazza San Marco, under the shadow of the Venetian Lion, which was a popular demonstration eclipsing the birth-day of the Emperor of Austria.

At Naples, the drawing formerly took place under the oversight of the Corte de Conti, with the benediction of a priest, and in the presence of the people. The result of the drawing was passed from mouth to mouth to the utmost limits of the city, and even of the kingdom, with a swiftness which anticipated the electric telegraph.* This

* "I one day left the Vicaria at the moment when the last of the five numbers was drawn. I found a cab at the door, and gave the driver ten minutes to travel the half league, which lay between Castel Capuano and my lodgings. I expected to surprise everyone in the house, telling them the five fortunate numbers which were yet unknown at the nearest lottery office. My cabby did his best; twice he nearly overturned me; he came into collision with carts, brushed against foot passengers, forgot to salute the Madonnas, passed a carriage of one of the royal princes at the risk of being arrested next day, and arrived in less than nine minutes. Already everyone knew the result of the drawing."—*Monnier.*

could only occur in a community where all lived, moved, and had their being in the lottery. The lottery raised up around itself a great number of dependent industries and businesses, whose *morale* was of the same character as the parent institution. The schemers and actors in these pursuits embraced the most varied characters, from the mere street lounger who cunningly deluded the poor into the belief that he knew what numbers would be successful,* to the capuchin, who piously sold numbers on which rested the blessing of the Madonna. The most signal business of this character was the clandestine lottery. The tickets at the government offices cost too much for the slender purses of the poor. To give them an opportunity to waste their little sums on the

* "One of these schemers would say to a lazzarone, 'Go and play three numbers, any that you wish, when you return I will tell you what they are, for I feel the spirit which approaches me and whispers in my ear.' The victim believed and ran off to buy. An accomplice of the seer went too, witnessed the purchase, and returned more rapidly than the deluded purchaser. Of course the numbers were told correctly, to the delight of the lazzarone, who believed this a sure sign that the numbers would win. When the lot was drawn and the usual blanks turned up, the lazzarone complained. The reply, like the deceit, was levelled to his ignorance. 'It is because of your sins. You are a miserable unbeliever.'"—*Monnier*.

weekly drawings, private and clandestine offices were kept, where the ventures were infinitesimalized down to the soldi of the lazzaroni. In these offices millions of francs* were annually gained from the most ragged and miserable people in Europe. The clandestine office was as honourable as the royal one. When prizes were won they were religiously paid.

There has been already visible improvement in the people; but it is only by educating a generation that this devotion to an immoral and suicidal pursuit of gain can be eradicated. The ignorant populace cannot see that it is the Government who always wins, the people who perpetually lose. No government could put itself to a severer trial than by the effort to abolish the lottery at Naples. Garibaldi was worshipped, believed immortal by this strange people, but he could not abolish the lottery. The people would have recalled Francis II. in order to reacquire the right to ruin themselves in his favour, and to fill the vaults of his treasury

* A woman was arrested in Naples under the present government who kept a clandestine lottery office. Her weekly profits were a thousand francs.—*Monnier.*

by reducing themselves to the necessity of dying upon pallets of straw.*

The passion of gaming and of the lottery subsists upon ignorance. Some of the economies of the people are marked by the same want of calculation. A woman of the people, who leads an honest life, often hastens to invest her earnings in jewellery. For this jewellery she may only pay in part, pawning it at the next shop for enough to complete her purchase. Then she begins a battle with interest which may be protracted for years; all her little and uncertain earnings being absorbed to pay the interest upon a jewel which she does not enjoy—perhaps has never possessed. Usury is the most remorseless and insatiable of vampires, and the people of Naples afford him one of his choicest banquets. It is the popular belief that a woman who pursues this course acts economically. Perhaps she does, relatively; while others spend in

* It is gratifying to know that the Government lottery offices are decreasing. On the 1st of January, 1864, the offices were reduced from 1500 to 1048. These are distributed as follows:—In Piedmont, 67; in the Emilia and Marches, 100; in Lombardy, 117; in Tuscany and Umbria, 127; in Sicily, 252; in the Neapolitan provinces, 385.

lottery tickets which never win, she hoards, denies herself, sells her daily bread, to preserve her jewels. Those who display gold ornaments are cited as examples of modesty, foresight and virtue. It is by the numerous rings which cover each joint of her ten fingers that one may recognize in Naples the Mother of the Gracchi.*

* * *

The unorganized Camorra is diffused throughout the towns of the late kingdom, and in some communes embraces the highest civil functionaries, who make gain by extortion, by selling privileges and trading in justice. Brigandage is a feeder to their mill; they encourage it, icker with it, and supply it with recruits. The two thus mutually maintain each other and bleed Italy.

The brigandage of the city is more difficult to exterminate than that of the mountain. It is everywhere and nowhere; occult, mysterious, invisible, impalpable, imponderable. It is a moral carbonic fluid widely diffused and deadly; but bayonets and bullets are powerless against it.

* Monnier.

The communal system of Italy has been, in its darkest days, the repository of a degree of liberty. Under it a measure of independence has been preserved to the people through almost all forms of government, and it has furnished an admirable basis for the constitutional system. It is essentially like the American plan of township, municipal and county governments. But what could the nation do with towns, counties, cities, in which the whole population winked at robbery, and elected their chief rascals to the chief offices? The Government of Italy finds itself face to face with facts of this nature. It confronts local councils, local courts, local militia, diseased, rotten with the vice of the Camorra; and this brigandage of the city yields an annual crop of brigandago on the mountain.

The people know this, for it is part of their life. They have no faith in the right, no confidence in public officers, and, either through fear or favour, make their little bargains with the brigands as secretly as possible.

Take a few facts from Saint-Jorioz, captain in the Italian army. His book is such a shining in-

stance of moral courage; he gives facts, names, dates, and distributes his adjectives, with such moral intrepidity, that a new order of knighthood ought to be created for his especial honour.

The evening of the 16th of November, 1861, twelve armed brigands entered Civita d'Antina, remained there for several hours entirely at their ease, and then departed quietly, after having captured four persons, whom they conducted across the Ziri to the summit of Mount Meta. Neither the syndic, the captain of the national guard, nor the guard itself, said a word or made a motion to prevent the crime. Not until four hours after the departure of the brigands could the friends of the captured men induce the authorities to give information to the nearest regular troops. If the notice had been sent immediately, the brigands must have been captured by the Italian soldiers. Two of the unfortunate prisoners were shot, dying victims of that strange compound of fear of, and complicity with, the brigands.

The officer in command at Civitella Roveta

to whom the information was at last sent, in making his report of the occurrence says:—

"The inhabitants almost always aid the brigands, and are, in their turn, forced to pay contributions and ransoms."

It frequently happens that these darkened, deluded, misguided, corrupted, infatuated people take the utmost pains to conceal the loss of their friends who have been borne off by the brigands. They dry their tears when the Italian officer approaches the door, and stoutly deny the rumour that a father or brother has been taken off to the mountains, and a ransom put upon his head. But they are not idle; negotiations have already been set on foot with some well-known accomplice of the brigands in the village. There is much haggling about terms, a good many messages go to and fro, from the wood to the village, from the village to the wood. At the end of three days, father, or son, or brother returns; but he has not seen a brigand! He is ready to swear by all the saints, that he paid no ransom, for he was never arrested by bandits. In fact, he has beggared himself, perhaps, to obtain his release. This is

the work of the Camorra, of the brigandage of the town, which is one of the most fruitful sources of that on the mountains.

On the night of the 5th of November, 1861, forty brigands in the uniform of Italian soldiers, and calling themselves Piedmontese, entered the house of the family Baccari, in Castronuovo, and captured there an old priest about eighty years of age, by name Don Guiseppe Baccari, and uncle of the syndic of the town. The brigands imposed a tax of twelve thousand ducats on the family Baccari as a ransom for the octogenarian priest. The syndic and his nephew concealed the fact from the military authority, in the fear that the troops would find the hiding place of the brigands and irritate them to kill their relative.

The facts in this case are a compendium of brigandage. The brigands were upon a mountain close to the Pontifical frontier, and the messenger of the family Baccari went backwards and forwards for several days, conveying money, clothing and provisions to them.

The military power got wind of the affair and ordered the arrest of the messenger. The

brigands, hearing this, took to their heels for the states of the Pope, leaving the poor old priest to be found and cared for by his friends.

Now, in this case, the family was not poor, it was not in humble condition, the captive was not insignificant. On the contrary the Baccari were rich, the highest civil officer in the town was a member of it, and the old priest was the object of reverence for the whole family and village. Yet no appeal dare be made to the military authority. The very love they bear their friend leads them to seek by dark and crooked ways, by blandishments and sweet words, by compliance with every whim of the brigands, to propitiate this power of the Devil. Was all this necessary? No! The first news that the messenger was captured by the troops, sent the valiant brigands flying for their lives across the frontier.

Now who fishes in these muddy streams? The Camorra. Who sweats to soil them? The Camorra. The Camorrist comes forward on these occasions with his advice and his little commissions, his threats and his *ultimatum*. No sovereign ever spoke more confidently of his power

to enforce his lightest wishes. Through him the negotiations are opened, and only an accident prevents their ending in the robbery, in Camorrist style, of the entire patrimony of the family. In this case the Camorrist gets one sum from the family, and pays another to the brigands. It is not necessary that he should be an accomplice of the brigands, in any but that general sense in which all scoundrels are accomplices of the Devil. He has his trade and they have theirs.

"In this case," says Saint-Jorioz, "the family Baccari piled Pelion upon Ossa of falsehood, deceit, subterfuge, in order to restrain the troops from doing their duty. They lied about the number of the brigands, lied about the place of rendezvous, lied about the tax imposed upon them, lied constantly and about everything. And yet this family had the reputation of being honest and *liberal!*"

One of the cunning methods pursued by this Camorra is worth especial mention. It is nothing less than capturing those who have been drafted into the military service. Antonio Staula, a

brigand, gave himself up on the 8th of November, 1862. His confessions filled the town of Pico with such an odour, that gallant Italian officers were forced, morally, to hold their noses, or be suffocated. The *business* of brigandage, of robbery, plundering, extorting, assessing, squeezing money out of everybody and everything, was found to be carried on by the syndic, the communal councillors, the priests, and all and singular everybody else in Pico. Take one instance. The officials were engaged in procuring exemptions from the draft. Staula reported that he went on the mountain at their suggestion, "that the best thing he could do would be to arrest and detain all those drafted young men who were under orders to march."

Here is a receipt given by one of these brigands of the city, alias secretary of a commune :—

"I, the undersigned, acknowledge the receipt of six ducats from Francesco Colella, and agree to repay the said sum in case his son Rosario should be obliged to render military service. It is further agreed that, after the draft shall be closed, the said Francesco Colella shall *restore this*

receipt with such a present as his sense of propriety may dictate. MODESTO POMPEI.

"PICO, *Dec.* 20, 1861."

It is needless to say that this gentleman was properly provided for by the Government.

In this same Pico, Saverio Grosso, another communal officer, made a business of this form of Camorra. He levied taxes upon the contractor who supplied the troops with provisions, attempted to bribe the officer in command of them to facilitate his trade, got his vegetables and fruits for nothing from the market women, and even tried to force seven carlines out of a poor woman who furnished water to a detachment of troops.

The syndic of this commune sent money and provisions to a brigand named Renzi. Another Renzi, a brigand leader, was favoured by nearly all the officers of this commune. They even inscribed his name upon the rolls of the national guard; and to the last stoutly maintained that he was no brigand, though all the members of the guard who took part in the arrest, asserted that he was not only a brigand, but a leader of brigands.

Such a state of the local government presents a most difficult problem for the nation. It is in the power of the ministry to dissolve communal or municipal councils, but a new election must be ordered within three months. In some instances this has been done, but as might be expected the new officers are no better than the old.

Saint-Jorioz says, "At Fondi, Traetto, Itri, Pastena, Pontecoroo, and at Roccaguglielma, we saw one set of Camorrists driven out only to be succeeded by others of the worst character. Time, the great healer, alone can cure these innumerable wounds, these inveterate cancers."*

* "Brigantaggio," p. 68.

END OF VOL. I.

HARRILD, PRINTER, LONDON.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 June, 2018